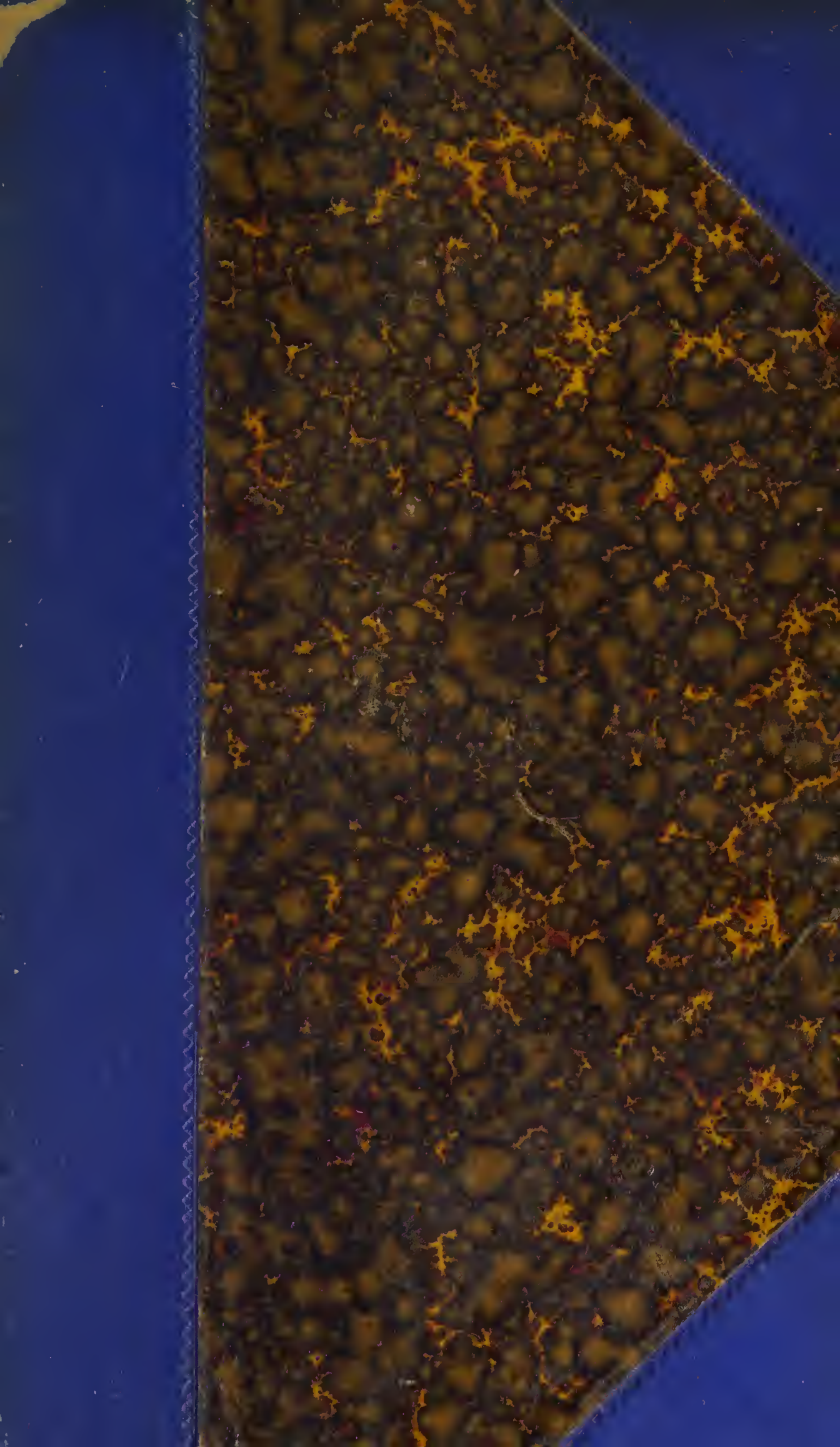

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THE THEATRE.—No. 31, THIRD SERIES.

"She's going to smoke!"

Mary Rorke. Chas Wyndham.

"14 DAYS."

IMPROVED PERMANENT PHOTOGRAPH BY BROWN, BARNES & BELL.

THE THEATRE.

A Monthly Review

OF

THE DRAMA, MUSIC, AND THE FINE ARTS.

EDITED BY CLEMENT SCOTT.

VOL. VI.—NEW SERIES.

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The Theatre.

JULY 1882.

THE FIRST DOÑA SOL.

THE performance of "Hernani," given the other day at the Gaiety Theatre, will have recalled to the recollection of readers familiar with the "Memoirs" of Alexandre Dumas, the vivacious chroniqueur's amusing account of the circumstances under which the play was written and produced, and of the difficulties encountered by Victor Hugo from Mdlle. Mars, the creator of the rôle of Doña Sol. The story is told in Dumas's brightest vein; in fact, the pages in which it is set forth are among the most sparkling in the author's wonderfully spirited book, and their ipsissima verba will be welcomed even by those who, at the end of thirty years, retain a good general remembrance of the brilliantly-related anecdote.

By the autumn of 1829, the year before the last Bourbon King of France was driven from the throne, the struggle between romanticism and classicism had, practically, been determined; the apostles of the romantic school, Dumas, Victor Hugo, Casimir Delavigne, and Alfred de Vigny, moving foremost in the victorious band who had taken upon themselves the mission of regenerating the stage in accordance with the newer intellectual lights and aspirations of the time. The Revolution had strangely left the

theatre untouched, or, to speak more precisely, had accepted its conventionalities, as it had accepted the second-hand classical nomenclature and trappings of the Consulate and the Empire. But, in 1829, the sneering and contemptuous dictum of Voltaire was no longer capable of leading the judgment of France, and Shakespeare—whose non-classical works he had likened to dung-heaps, from which a jewel might now and then be snatched—was scaring Racine and Corneille from the stage of the Théâtre Français. Scaring is really the right word, for the new school, which had Shakespeare for its tutelary genius, was nothing short of a terror to the chief actors, who regarded its invasion of the classic stage as that of an "inroad of barbarians." But with the best grace they could assume—and the assumption was often anything but successful—they submitted to the rule of la force majeure.

Mdlle. Mars, the leading tragic actress at that time, had made an immense impression by her performance in Dumas's "Henry III.," but her success had not in the least shaken her faith in the supreme excellence of the old state of things theatrical, and she never lost an opportunity of showing that, while accepting the inevitable, she had little respect for it, and less liking. A year before 1829, she had strongly opposed her will and her prejudices against the casting of Dumas's "Henry III.;" the discussions then raised were so heated, indeed, as to give rise to differences that continued between them down to the death of the great tragédienne. Her way, if not her method of annoying the "barbarians," is most graphically as well as amusingly described by Dumas, in relation to the rehearsal of "Hernani."

It had been intended by Baron Taylor, the director of the Théâtre Français, as Commissioner of the King, to produce as the staple attraction of the winter season of 1829-30, Victor Hugo's "Marion Delorme," but the play had been interdicted by the censor. Baron Taylor was in great perplexity in this overthrowing of his plans, and saw nothing before him but a time of disaster. It was then the 7th of August, and it had been the purpose of the manager to mount, rehearse, and get "Marion Delorme" ready for public presentation in the January or February of the following year. Victor Hugo reassured him; promised to have another play ready for him by the 1st of October; set to work on "Hernani" on the 17th of September, and finished it on the 25th of the same month—three days less than the time it had taken him to write

"Marion Delorme." The piece was in due time cast, and the four principal parts distributed to the chief actors of the Français, as follows: Mdlle. Mars was to play Doña Sol; Joanny, Ruy Gomez; Michelot, Charles the Fifth; and Firmin, Hernani. Of these actors, only Joanny had any sympathy whatever with the literature of the new romantic school; they were not openly rude to its professors, but, as says Dumas of Michelot, who was a professor at the Conservatoire, "au fond, il nous abhorrait."

The rehearsals began, and with the rehearsals the daily renewed and multiplied expression of annoying remarks and indulgence of yet more irritating gestures, aimed at the "barbarian" author, who usually sat in the front row of the stalls, or in the orchestra, conscious that every word or gesture intended for his mortification was observed by thirty or forty actors, musicians, prompters, lamp-men, and, indeed, by the whole crowd of stage employés, to whom these episodes, which often stung the author to the quick, were a constant source of diversion from the monotony and tedium of the day's work. In the case of Victor Hugo, says Dumas, things went on somewhat in this fashion. In the midst of the rehearsal, Mdlle. Mars would suddenly stop, and say to Firmin, to Michelot, or to Joanny: "Excuse me, I want to say a word to the author." The actor addressed would make a sign of assent and remain dumb and motionless at his place. Mdlle. Mars then advanced to the foot-lights, shaded her eyes with her hand, and, though she knew quite well in what part of the orchestra the author was seated, pretended to search for him. It was a little bit of acting entirely of her own.

"M. Hugo! Is M. Hugo there?" she asked.

"Here I am, madame," replied Hugo, rising.

"Ah, very well, thanks. Tell me, M. Hugo——"

"What, madame?"

"I have to speak this verse:

> "Vous êtes mon lion! superbe et généreux!"

"Yes, madame, Hernani says to you:

> "Hélas j'aime pourtant d'une amour bien profonde!
> Ne pleure—mourons plutôt! Que n'ai-je un monde,
> Je te le donnerais! Je suis bien malheureux!

And you reply:

> "Vous êtes mon lion! superbe et généreux!"

"Do you like that, M. Hugo?"

"What?"

"'Vous êtes mon lion!'"

"I wrote it so, madame, therefore I thought it good."

"You hold by it then—your lion?"

"I do, and I do not; if you can find me something better, I will put it in place of the other."

"Oh, it is not for me to find it; I'm not the author."

"Very well then, madame; in that case let us leave the line as it is written."

"Well, I must say it seems very funny to me to call M. Firmin 'mon lion!'"

"Ah, that is because in playing the part of Doña Sol, you choose to remain Mdlle. Mars. If you were really the ward of Ruy Gomez de Sylva, that is to say, a noble Castilian of the sixteenth century, you would not see in Hernani, M. Firmin; but you would see in him one of those terrible band-leaders who made Charles the Fifth tremble even in his capital; and then you would not find that there was anything funny in calling such a man your lion."

"Very well, if you cling to your lion, let us say no more about it. I am here to speak what is written in the manuscript; you say 'mon lion,' so I'll say 'mon lion.' Mon dieu! it is all the same to me. Let us go on, Firmin:

"Vous êtes mon lion! superbe et généreux!"

And the rehearsal went on; only the next day, on arriving at the same point, Mdlle. Mars stopped as before; as before advanced to the foot-lights, shaded her eyes with her hand, and pretended to search for the author.

"M. Hugo," she asked, in her dry voice—in her own voice of Mdlle. Mars, and not as Célimène; "is M. Hugo there?"

"Here I am, madame," replied Hugo with his usual placidity.

"Ah! that's well. I'm glad you are there."

"Madame, I had the honour to present my homages to you before the rehearsal began."

"I remember; well, have you reflected?"

"About what, madame?"

"About what I said to you yesterday."

"Yesterday you did me the honour to say many things to me."

"Yes, you are right, but I refer to that famous line."

"Which?"

"Oh, you know quite well."

"I assure you, madame, I do not; you make so many good and just remarks that I confound one with another."

"I am speaking of that line about the lion."

"Ah yes! 'Vous êtes mon lion;' I remember."

"Well, have you found another to replace it?"

"I confess I haven't tried to find one."

"You don't think it dangerous, then?"

"What do you call dangerous?"

"I call dangerous anything that may be hissed."

"I never thought myself above being hissed."

"That may be; but one must try to be as little hissed as possible."

"You think, then, that the audience will hiss my line of the lion?"

"I am sure of it."

"Then, madame, it will be because you have not delivered it with your habitual talent."

"I'll speak it as well as I can; but I should prefer——"

"What?"

"To have something else to say."

"What?"

"Anything else, in fact."

"What?"

"Say"—and Mdlle. Mars appeared to be searching for the word which, for three days, she had been grinding between her teeth—"Say, for example, a—a—a——

"Vous êtes, monseigneur, superbe et généreux!

'Monseigneur' will make the verse as well as 'mon lion,' will it not?"

"Certainly, madame; only 'mon lion' lifts the verse and 'monseigneur' knocks it down. I would rather be hissed for a good verse than applauded for a bad one."

"Very well, very well, don't let us quarrel about it; we'll speak

your good verse without changing anything in it. Go on, my dear M. Firmin; let us continue:

"Vous êtes mon lion! superbe et généreux!"

As a matter of course, at the first representation, Mdlle. Mars, instead of saying, "Vous êtes mon lion!" said "Vous êtes, monseigneur." The verse was neither applauded nor hissed, and was not worth the trouble that had been taken with it.

A little further on in the play, Ruy Gomez, after having surprised Hernani and Doña Sol locked in each other's arms, makes Hernani, on the announcement of the King's entrance, hide in a room the door of which is masked by a picture. Then begins the famous scene known as that of the portraits, containing seventy-six verses, and passing between Don Carlos and Ruy Gomez; the scene in which Doña Sol listens dumb and motionless as a statue, and in which she takes no part until the moment when the King is about to cause the Duke to be arrested, when she throws off her veil, and casting herself between the Duke and the guards, cries:

"Roi Don Carlos, vous êtes
Un mauvais roi!"

This long-continued silence and immobility had always shocked Mdlle. Mars. The Théâtre Français, accustomed to the traditions of the comedy of Molière and the tragedy of Corneille, utterly rebelled against the "mise en scène" of the modern drama, and, in general, understood neither the ardour of movement nor the poetry of immobility. From this it resulted that poor Doña Sol did not know what to do with her person during the delivery of those seventy-six verses.

One day she resolved to come to an explanation with the author. Her way of proceeding has already been described. The author stands up in the orchestra, and Mdlle. Mars addresses him over the footlights:

"Is that you there, M. Hugo?"

"Yes, madame."

"Ah! good! I want you to do me a service."

"With great pleasure. What is it?"

"That of telling me what I am doing there."

"Where?"

"Why, on the stage while M. Michelot and M. Joanny are talking together."

"You are listening, madame."

"I understand that; but it appears to me a very long time to be doing nothing but listen."

"You know, madame, that the scene was still longer; and that I have already cut out twenty verses."

"Very good; but cannot you cut out twenty more?"

"Impossible, madame!"

"Or, at least, contrive in some way for me to take part in it?"

"But you actually do take part in it, even by your presence. It concerns the man you love, whose life or death is in debate. The situation is, it seems to me, sufficiently strong for you to await the end impatiently, but silently."

"Well, I only say it is very long."

"I don't find it so, madame."

"Very good; let us say no more about it, then. But the audience will certainly ask: 'What is Mdlle. Mars doing, with her hand upon her chest? It was hardly worth while giving her a part in which she has nothing to do but stand still, a veil over her eyes, and without speaking, for the entire half of an act.'"

"The audience will whisper behind their hands, that the heart, not of Mdlle. Mars, but of Doña Sol, is beating; that beneath the veil, not of Mdlle. Mars, but of Doña Sol, her visage flushes with hope or pales with terror; that during the silence, not of Mdlle. Mars, but of Doña Sol, the lover of Hernani amasses in her heart the storm which bursts forth in these words—not very respectful for a subject to her king:

"Roi Don Carlos, vous êtes
Un mauvais roi!'

and, take my word for it, madame, the public will be satisfied."

"That's your idea; so be it. I really don't know why I trouble myself in this way. If the audience hiss during this scene it will not be me they hiss, since I have not a word to say in it. Now, Michelot; now, Joanny—let us go on.

"Roi Don Carlos, vous êtes
Un mauvais roi!

There—you are quite satisfied with that, I hope, M. Hugo?"

"Quite satisfied, madame."

And with imperturbable serenity Victor Hugo resumed his seat. But the next day Mdlle. Mars returned to the charge, and the next day, and the next; until, at length, the author's patience was unable to sustain any further tension. The rehearsal finished, he went on to the stage, and approaching Mdlle. Mars, said:

"Madame, I wish to have the honour of saying two words to you."

"To me?" asked Mdlle. Mars, struck by the solemnity of this introduction.

"To you."

"Where?"

"Wherever you please."

"Come this way, then."

Leading the way, Mdlle. Mars conducted Hugo into the smaller green-room, in a corner of which Louise Desfréaux was sitting alone. This young actress was one of the antipathies of Mdlle. Mars. On seeing the great tragédienne and Hugo enter, Mdlle. Desfréaux rose and discreetly left the room. Mdlle. Mars stopped and posed upon the mantelpiece the hand in which she held her rôle.

"Well," she asked, "what is it you wish to say to me?"

"I wish to tell you, madame, that I have formed a resolution."

"What resolution, monsieur?"

"To request you to give up your part."

"My part! Of what part are you speaking?"

"Of that which you have done me the honour to accept in my drama."

"What! the part of Doña Sol?" cried Mdlle. Mars in amazement. "This part?" holding up the roll of paper she held in her hand, and pressing down her black eyelashes in a way that, at certain moments, gave an incredible expression of hardness to her eyes.

Hugo bowed.

"Par exemple!" cried Mdlle. Mars, striking the marble chimney-piece with the paper roll, and stamping on the floor with her foot; "this is the first time an author ever thought of taking back a part from me!"

"Well, madame, I think it good that an example should be made—and I make it."

"But why—why do you want to take the part from me?"

"Because I think I have observed something, madame—that when you do me the honour to address me, you appear to be completely regardless to whom you are speaking."

"In what way, monsieur?"

"You are a woman of great talent, I know; but there is one thing, I repeat, which you do not appear to suspect of yourself, and which, in that case, I must teach you: it is, madame, that I likewise am a man of great talent; take that for settled, I beg, and treat me accordingly."

"You think, then, that I shall act your part badly?"

"I know that you will play it admirably well, madame; but I also know that, from the beginning of the rehearsals, you have been very unpolite towards me, which is unworthy both of Mdlle. Mars and of M. Victor Hugo."

"Oh!" muttered Mdlle. Mars, "it would really serve you right to give you back your part."

Hugo held out his hand.

"I am ready to receive it, madame," he said.

"And if I do not play it, who will play it?"

"Oh, mon dieu! madame—anybody; Mdlle. Despréaux, for example. She would not have your talent, doubtless; but she is young and pretty; of three conditions demanded by the part, she would supply two; besides that, she would have for me that which I reproach you with not having—that is to say, the consideration to which I am entitled."

And Hugo remained with open hand outstretched, still waiting for Mdlle. Mars to return him the part.

"Mdlle. Despréaux! Mdlle. Despréaux!" cried Mdlle. Mars; "that is a good joke, indeed! You are paying court, it seems, to Mdlle. Despréaux."

"I? I never spoke to her in my life."

"So, then, you really, positively and officially, demand back your part?"

"Officially and positively, I demand back my part."

"Well, then, I shall keep it, I shall play it, and as nobody else in Paris could play it, I promise you."

"Let it be so, then; keep the rôle; but don't forget what I have said to you in regard to the behaviour which should be exhibited between persons of our merit."

And Hugo, bowing to Mdlle. Mars, left her dumbfounded by this high dignity to which she had not been accustomed by the authors of the Empire, who all knelt before her talent, and knew quite well, moreover, that their plays would not bring them in a sou without her.

From that day Mdlle. Mars was cold but polite towards Hugo, and, as she had promised him, when the evening of the first representation arrived, played the part of Doña Sol admirably.

C. S. C.

THE VERNACULAR DRAMA IN INDIA.

By Delissa Joseph.

VERY little information is obtainable relating to the early history of the drama in India, and such as is obtainable is very unreliable. For the present purpose it will be sufficient to go back about a hundred years, when Kalidasa wrote the series of plays which have obtained for him, among Europeans at least, the sobriquet of "the Indian Shakespeare." These were written in Sanscrit, and foremost amongst them was his "Sakuntala," a work which is played to this day, and which is so universally known in India that its name always acts as a charm wherewith to attract an audience. Indeed, it has been found that in many of the smaller Indian towns the acquaintance with the drama is limited to the knowledge of this ponderous work, and that in such places no other production will attract the smallest audience. Kalidasa was the first native dramatist of whom there is any considerable record, or whose memory has lived in the minds of the people. He may be said to have almost created the modern drama in India, and, since his time, travelling companies of more or less significance have acted in Sanscrit, in Marhati, in Guzrati, in Hindee, in Hindustani, and sometimes in English, in all parts of the empire.

The next great impetus was given by Vazadallishah, King of Delhi, who, about 1851, wrote and produced a play which, in its popularity, is only second to Kalidasa's great work, and which bore the title "Indursabha." This was a fairy drama of a most ambitious character, and upon the illustration and mounting of

which the King spent immense sums. The parts were assigned to his wives and to some of his courtiers, and the King himself is reported to have played a subordinate character, after the manner of some of our modern stage-managers, who, although in truth responsible for the perfection of the entire ensemble, and capable of ably filling parts of some moment, are satisfied to assign themselves some trifling rôle, that they may the better devote themselves, during rehearsals, to the practice of their knowledge of theatrical effect. The motive of Vazadallishah's undertaking was much the same as that which prompts many a royal amateur in these times to devote himself to an art: in a word, his attachment to the fascinating subject.

But it was only some twenty years ago that the nucleus was formed of the Indian drama as we at present find it. Lord Elphinstone founded, among the native students of the Elphinstone College at Bombay, an amateur club for the performance of plays in English, with the view of strengthening their acquaintance with that language. About five years later this developed into an amateur club, independent of the College, under the management of Mr. C. S. Nazir, and of which most of the members were adults. For some seven years this company occupied their spare time in giving, in the character of amateurs, performances in English in various towns. From this they made no profit of any importance, the admission-money, as a rule, simply re-imbursing them for their expenses, the main idea of the association being to improve themselves in English, to gratify their histrionic ambition or vanity, and to attempt to cultivate among their fellow-countrymen a taste for a better class of entertainment than that to which they had for some tin ⁻ been accustomed. Later on, in consequence of the deaths of some of the members and the secession of others in order to devote themselves to their respective callings, the club was disbanded. It was re-formed, however, about a year later as a professional company, and commenced again playing in English. As it was found that the English did not support these efforts sufficiently to make the experiment pay, and as the natives—the class for whom these entertainments were more especially designed—did not appreciate the performances by reason of their being in an unfamiliar language, it was decided that Guzrati should be the future mouthpiece of the troupe. This enabled them to travel throughout the Bombay Presidency, where that language is spoken, and to enjoy much

popularity and success. But at the end of four years, finding that their movements were thus restricted to that Presidency, the company pluckily determined once more to change the language of their répertoire, this time deciding upon Hindustani, which is practically the language of India. In this language they have acted ever since, and its being so generally understood has enabled them to travel throughout the Empire of India, and to perform with remarkable success and the warmest encouragement in every town of the slightest pretensions throughout its length and breadth. Besides this, they have acted at Singapore and in Ceylon, before audiences who thoroughly appreciated the entertainment, in spite of their complete ignorance of the language.

The company, whose story is thus detailed for the better illustration of this article, is known as The Parsee Elphinstone Dramatic Company; the present proprietors, who are also the principal actors, being Messrs. Párakh, Madan, and Sakloth. It consists entirely of Parsee gentlemen of education and talent, and more recently some women have joined the troupe, to take the place of the boys who have hitherto played the female characters. The difficulty, thus overcome, and which recalls the position of the English stage, in this particular, prior to 1662, arises from the deep-rooted prejudice entertained against the stage by the Parsee women, and which prevents them ever becoming actresses. The men of the company are described by the local newspapers, vernacular and English, as being both highly talented and conspicuously versatile. The women, as before mentioned, have only lately joined the company, but are considered to show much intelligence and promise.

The répertoire of the company is thoroughly comprehensive, ranging from the two great standard works already referred to, to a version of "Mother Goose." Between these extremes are plays founded upon Mahomedan religious history, and upon stories in the "Arabian Nights," historical plays such as "Darius" and "Alexander the Great," original plays bearing upon modern life in India, and translations of English plays. Among the most successful of these latter have been the Hindustani renderings of such divergent examples as "Othello," "The Honeymoon," "Aurora Floyd," "The Octoroon," and a dramatic version, in the same language, of Moore's "Lalla Rookh." The work of translation is generally done by Parsee and Mahomedan monshees, assisted by some member of the company. It may be mentioned that one very popular

play, "Leila Mynoon," which always proves attractive, is nothing more nor less than a species of Indian "Romeo and Juliet."

Experience has taught these Indian actors that a play, whatever be its literary or dramatic merits, is not acceptable to the average Indian audience unless music is introduced. As nothing is therefore performed by them in which songs or concerted pieces of some description have not been interpolated, their productions really partake of the character of melodramas and comedy-operas. Another form of entertainment very favourably received is the pantomimic farce, which, amid a medley of song and dance and action, hits off with conspicuous success the comic side of Indian nature. In all their productions great attention is paid to scenery and costume, which are always of a thoroughly characteristic description.

The reason for the choice of the story of an individual company has already been given. But it must be borne in mind that there exists, and have existed perhaps as long as the Elphinstone Company, several other very admirable Parsee companies, who have been doing excellent work, and who have attained well-deserved success. Without being invidious, among these may be particularly mentioned The Victoria Company, The Original Victoria Company, Nazar's stock company at Bombay, and The Natuk Ootocjak Company.

As a matter of fact, there are at present in India some two hundred and fifty vernacular companies, acting in the many languages of the country, including Hindoos, Baboos, Banias, Mahomedans, and, indeed, members of most of the national races; some amateur, mostly professional; some travelling, some stock companies; some springing up to-day, others disappearing to-morrow; but none approaching the standard of excellence of the Parsee companies. This last observation more particularly applies to some of the little Hindoo and Mahomedan companies, better known by the name of Bhaváias, whose performances are often characterised by much indelicacy, but who are fortunately dying out. In this connection, it is interesting to note that the Mahomedans are said to make poor players but good audiences; which latter fact is traced to their being essentially an excitement-seeking people: a people of pleasure, and the followers of a creed preaching pleasure as the summit of ambition here and hereafter.

Places of amusement are now daily springing up in the various

cities and towns throughout the empire, while, but a few years since, the number of theatres and public halls available for dramatic representations was inconsiderable and scattered. The rajahs in particular show a most lively interest in the drama, and several of them have contributed large sums to erect theatres or their equivalents, notable amongst which is the Jeypore Theatre, built by the late Rajah of Jeypore. Calcutta and Bombay boast four or five very good theatres, and there are regimental theatres in almost every town where British soldiers are stationed. Nevertheless, the travelling companies have very frequently to build pavilions and pandalls, at a great cost, when visiting places where there are no public buildings of a suitable character.

To prove how much more enlightened a view of the stage is now taken by the natives, it may be mentioned that some ten years ago not only did the Mahomedan, Parsee, and Hindoo ladies object to witness dramatic performances, but even men thought it derogatory to patronise the theatre. Happily this prejudice is rapidly disappearing, and now even the women of the harems openly witness theatrical representations, with every appearance of delight and admiration. As an indication of the enterprise with which entertainment of the kind has been sought after in times when its enjoyment was partially forbidden, it may be stated that at Lucknow, Mahomedan women have been known to come to the theatre dressed in male attire, in order that they might be able to be present at performances which they would not have been allowed, in the ordinary course, to attend in company with a male audience.

The remarkable success which has attended the labours of the Parsee companies in India has induced them, at the suggestion of many of their Anglo-Indian admirers, to contemplate visiting London next year. The scheme as at present sketched out is for the Elphinstone and the Victoria companies to temporarily bury the hatchet and to form a combined company, bringing with them the whole of their interesting scenery and costumes, and presenting, at a suitable theatre, such of their plays as they believe will be most acceptable here. It is confidently expected that the fact of their performing in an unfamiliar language will not at all prejudice their success. This is deduced, first, from the fact of this having been found no drawback when they have performed before English or Chinese audiences, and, secondly, from the fact of the French

German, Italian, and Dutch performances being thoroughly relished here by many whose acquaintance with those languages is perhaps sometimes as insignificant as their knowledge of Hindustani. But, beyond all this, they depend upon the large amount of attention they give to spectacle, to music, and, above all, to action, in its best sense, and upon the issue of synopses of the plays, to compensate for the strangeness of the dialogue. There can be no doubt that much interest will be aroused by the presentation of so entirely novel an entertainment, the proposal for which is now first publicly announced.

A THEATRICAL RIOT.

DURING my residence in New York I witnessed, on one occasion, a fracas at Burton's Theatre, which, but for the courage and determination displayed by one individual, might have resulted in very serious consequences. I occurred under the following circumstances. A piece had been brought out, entitled "Violet, or the Life of an Actress," in which several of the characters represented were supposed to be members of a theatrical troupe. In the course of the play one of the actors is asked how it is that, with his abilities, he has not risen higher in the profession. To which he replies: "Because noble lords do not run away with low comedians, and I can't afford to bribe the press."

This speech was usually applauded by the audience, many of whom were perfectly well aware which were the journals alluded to in the latter portion of it—the venality of certain of the newspapers at that period being notorious. It, however, gave great offence to the reporters connected with several of the daily and weekly papers, who were indignant at the reflections cast upon the body to which they belonged. Several letters were consequently addressed to Burton, the proprietor and manager of the theatre in question, asking him not to allow the obnoxious words to be spoken in future, and intimating that if the request, or rather, demand, of the writers were not complied with, he should be made to suffer for his refusal. But Burton was not a man easily to be intimidated, and he positively refused to submit to any dictation in the matter. Believing, too,

that the threats held out to him were simply "brutum fulmen," or, to use an Americanism, mere "tall talk," he somewhat unwisely made no additional provision for the preservation of order in the house in the event of any interruption of the performance being attempted.

Matters were in this condition, when one day a young friend of mine called on me at my father's office.

"M——," said he, "I guess there is going to be a muss* at Burton's to-night."

"What makes you think so?" I enquired.

"Why," was the reply, "I have just been speaking with a gentleman connected with the A—— (naming a well-known weekly journal), and he hinted that it was not unlikely that a disturbance might take place this evening. You know there is a very bitter feeling against Burton in certain circles, owing to his having refused to cut out that speech in 'Violet' about the press."

"Yes, I have heard as much," I responded.

"Well," continued my friend, "I think of going to Burton's to see what will happen, and I have come round to ask you to accompany me."

This I promised to do; and as I resided in Chambers Street—only a couple of hundred yards from the theatre—it was arranged that I should stop at the box-office on my way home to dinner and procure a couple of tickets. This I accordingly did, securing two places in one of the side-boxes close to the stage.

I pause here to observe that I had no idea that the "muss" of which my friend had spoken would prove to be of the serious character it actually assumed. My impression simply was that by persistent hissing and other manifestations of what Lovelace in "Clarissa" styles "tumultuous disapprobation," an organised attempt would be made to interrupt the play. Had I had the remotest conception that actual personal violence would be resorted to, I should, of course—as would have been my obvious duty—when

* This expression—commonly employed in the United States to denote a confused encounter—is generally supposed to be of purely transatlantic origin, but it is, nevertheless, good Elizabethan English. In "Antony and Cleopatra," Antony says:

"Of late when I cried, ho!
Like boys unto a muss, kings would start forth."

The word is, in fact, simply one of several still current in America, although obsolete in this country.

I called at the box-office, have given warning to the management of the impending riot.

When, soon after the doors were opened, my companion and myself entered the theatre, there was, at the first glance, nothing in the general aspect of the house to indicate that any disturbance was likely to occur; the audience being apparently of the same character as usual. But I shortly had occasion to alter my opinion.

That part of the auditorium which in the United States, as in England, had formerly been styled the pit, had, at the period of which I speak, at Burton's in common with several other of the New York theatres, been renamed the "parquette," wherefore I know not, as, had the intention been to make use of a French equivalent for the English term, "parterre" would, of course, have been the proper word. The pit, in former days, had been set apart exclusively for men, and hence, notwithstanding that the price of admission to the parquette was the same as to the boxes, the majority of female playgoers entertained a prejudice against what had hitherto been regarded as an unfashionable part of the house, although some few ladies were occasionally to be seen there. I was not, therefore, surprised to find that the occupants of the parquette were exclusively of the male sex, but there was one peculiarity in the aspect of the assemblage which at once attracted my attention. It was still early, and many of the back seats were vacant, yet the two front rows were not only filled, but even inconveniently crowded. The individuals composing this group were all of them provided either with canes (sword-canes they subsequently proved to be) or with heavy sticks, some of which were of such formidable dimensions that they might, without exaggeration, have been described as bludgeons. It was obvious that these men meant mischief, and I waited the dénouement with some little curiosity.

When the curtain rose, the play was suffered to proceed without interruption until the scene in which the speech, already referred to, was to be made. No sooner, however, were the first words of it uttered, than the members of the group in question started to their feet and made a simultaneous rush for the stage; on to which there was no difficulty in climbing, owing to the fact that the orchestra did not extend the whole width of the house. A scene of indescribable tumult and confusion ensued. In the boxes were several ladies and children, and these, although personally in no danger, were naturally not a little startled and alarmed at the outbreak; whilst,

at the same time, strong expressions of disapprobation greeted the rioters from all parts of the house.

On the stage, in the meanwhile, matters had assumed a very serious complexion. The movements of the malcontents had been so sudden and so little anticipated that they had succeeded in making good their footing upon the boards without any serious opposition being offered to their doing so. Some of the actresses fled in affright when the unlooked-for irruption took place, but the male performers, almost without exception, manfully stood their ground. The leader of the attacking party, who carried a sword-cane, drew his blade and flourished it menacingly in the air. To his companions—several of whom were similarly armed, but who, possibly, entertained some scruples about employing cold steel against defenceless men—he might have used the language of Pierre in "Venice Preserved:"

> "Why weep your coward swords half out their sheaths,
> Why do you not all brandish them like mine;"

for brandish his weapon he certainly did, and in the most absurd fashion. Addressing himself to Johnston—the actor in whose part the obnoxious words occurred—he demanded of that gentleman, in peremptory terms, that he should instantly promise that under no circumstances would he ever deliver them again. But the speaker had entirely mistaken his man. Johnston was about the last person to be intimidated by threats of violence, and of this fact he promptly gave most convincing proofs. Scattered about the stage were various theatrical properties, and amongst them was a heavy old-fashioned rapier. Hastily snatching it up, Johnston, who was an expert swordsman, parried a lunge his antagonist made at him, and struck the weapon from his hand with such force that the blade was shivered by the force of the blow. In another moment the actor had seized his late assailant by the throat, and, shortening his sword, he presented the point at the young man's breast. Then, with a determination of tone and manner which left no doubt in the minds of those he addressed that he would keep his word, turning to the rioters who were grouped in front of him, he said:

"By G——! if you attempt any further violence, I will deal with this fellow as he deserves! Off the stage, every one of you, this instant!"

For the man who, suddenly confronted by an unexpected peril,

displays infirmity of nerve, compassion rather than contempt may in most instances properly be felt. But what can be said of one who unprovoked, and of his own volition, thrusts himself into a broil, and then displays the most abject cowardice. Pale as death, and with his legs trembling under him, the late swaggering drawcansir in piteous accents implored his comrades to comply with the demand addressed to them, and so preserve his precious life. They had, indeed, no other alternative than to do so, for not only was their leader disarmed and, so to speak, in the hands of the enemy, but the other performers, taking heart from the resolution displayed by Johnston, had furnished themselves with such weapons as they could readily lay their hands upon, and stood prepared to repel any attack that might be made upon them. The tables had, in fact, been completely turned upon the aggressors, whose exit from the stage was as hurried and ignominious as their entry upon it had been bold and defiant.

The feeling of the house was unmistakably with the actors, and a perfect storm of hisses greeted the baffled rioters, who, thoroughly cowed by the defeat they had sustained, quickly quitted the theatre, and were seen no more that night. Johnston was enthusiastically cheered, and, coming forward to the footlights, he expressed his acknowledgments for the sympathy he and his brother artists had experienced at the hands of the audience. He added that, personally, he had—could have—no motive for objecting to the sentence which had given offence being eliminated from his part, but the manager having—as he had a perfect right to do—determined to retain it, he (Johnston) was not to be deterred from the performance of his duty by mob violence.

This brief address was also warmly applauded, and, after that, the play was resumed at the point where it had been interrupted, and proceeded as usual.

Thus terminated what, under other circumstances, might have proved to be a very serious affair. The promptness, however, with which the disturbance was quelled on the evening in question, so completely disheartened the malcontents, that on no future occasion was any attempt made to interrupt the performance of the piece, which ran for some weeks thereafter.

The incident of which I have spoken occurred upwards of a quarter of a century ago, and, with the exception of the Macready Riot at the Astor Place Opera House, in 1848, is the only instance I

can call to mind of any serious tumult having taken place in any New York theatre during the many years I resided in that city. It is true that when Mrs. Forrest appeared at Wallack's Theatre, a riot was anticipated; but so effectual were the measures taken by the civic authorities for the preservation of order, that if any such design had been entertained, it proved abortive. W. C. M.

LOVE LIES DEAD.

WHEN the year was in its prime,
And the earth laughed out in flow'rs;
In the golden Summer-time
Love in other days was ours.
Now the winter snows are here,
And the roses all are fled;
Like the pale enshrouded year,
Love lies dead.

I was but a foolish boy,
Yet my heart could sorely ache,
When you took it like a toy,
That some idle child may break.
Still I feel the smart again,
Though the healing years have fled,
Thine the triumph—mine the pain;
Love lies dead.

Yet I would your path were bright,
As the sunshine on the sea,
And the watches of the night,
Void of any thought of me.
Once you let me love you, dear
Once for me your lips were red
Lay him softly on his bier—
Love lies dead!

H. SAVILE CLARKE.

Our Musical-Box.

LONDON must indeed have a vigorous musical digestion not to have succumbed to the "surfeit of sweet sounds" which she has undergone during the past month. At the commencement of June there were three opera-houses open, all drawing large audiences nightly. In the way of orchestral concerts, the "Richter," "Symphony," and "Ganz" series were in full swing. Several novelties had already asserted their claims to public attention, and many more were still in prospect. As a musician, I rejoice that all the promises at that time put forth—or very nearly all—have been fulfilled; but as the compiler of a monthly résumé of musical events, I shudder at the thought of the task before me. Anything like adequate analysis of the leading works calling for notice, or careful and conscientious criticism of their respective performances, would fill at least three entire numbers of The Theatre; and my hard-hearted friend the Editor will not even hear of dispensing with his own and all his other contributors' articles in the present issue, so as to give me a faint chance of doing justice to the more salient musical incidents of the past month. With the materials for a volume at my pen's point, so to speak, I am restricted to the limits of a chapter. Instead of plunging into a very orgy of detail, which indulgence alone could enable me to discharge my duty with anything like efficiency, I find I must generalise—and that as succinctly as may be. This being so, I hasten to beg the pardon of composers, artists, and impresarii beforehand for the sins of omission and superficiality, with perpetrating which they will most assuredly be justified in charging me when they shall have glanced over this month's "Musical-Box." I can only urge, in extenuation of my offences, that the capacity to accommodate a gallon of liquid in a pint-pot is a sufficiently rare one to render my lack of it excusable.

* * * * *

The principal musical feature of the past month without doubt has been German Opera at Drury Lane, affording the British public copious opportunity of witnessing performances without precedent in this country for their artistic completeness. Not only were the renderings of well-known works, such as "Lohengrin," "Fidelio,"

and "Tannhäuser," admitted by the most experienced London musicians and critics to be revelations in many respects of their composers' true meanings and intentions; but operas of stupendous difficulty, never before heard here in their entirety, were produced almost faultlessly, as far as their execution was concerned, and with an intelligent observance of accessorial detail altogether above praise. No chorus singing I have ever listened to within the precincts of a London opera-house has approached that achieved by Messrs. Franke and Pollini's supers, under the masterly tuition and training of Carl Armbruster. It has been, in every way and throughout, excellent—alike forcible and delicate, irreproachable as far as its intonation was concerned, and, above all, in a high degree musically intelligent. Nor have I ever yet, in any of the metropolitan theatres devoted to the lyric drama, heard anything to be compared with the operatic accompaniments played by the Drury Lane orchestra—the same, I need scarcely say, which has so often electrified the undemonstrative audiences of St. James's Hall to fiery outbursts of enthusiasm at the "Richter" Concerts. Happy orchestra to call such a leader its own; luckiest of Kapellmeisters to hold perfect and absolute sway over so noble a body of executants!

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The Drury Lane series of performances was chiefly Wagnerian. Three well-known operas of the great Saxen composer were presented to the London public in such sort as to enable it for the first time to form a just estimate of their real value and significance; two more works, hitherto jibbed at by metropolitan impresarii, were introduced in their entirety to audiences which, for the last two or three years, have been gradually acquiring a fragmentary and episodical acquaintance with them in the concert-room, thanks to Hans Richter and his merry men. With respect to the renderings at the "Lane" of "Der Fliegender Hollaender," "Tannhäuser," and "Lohengrin," it is but the barest justice to everybody concerned in them—from the chef d'orchestre down to the humblest singing super—to state that they were as near perfection as any operatic performance can ever hope to be. Many English Wagner-worshippers of my acquaintance who had only heard the Italian or English versions of these works, as given in London, assured me that "the Master's true meaning had been a sealed book to them until these interpretations disclosed it." As a matter of fact, the renderings in

question could not fail to be extraordinarily instructive to any musical person who had never enjoyed the privilege of listening to a first-class German performance of the works alluded to—say, in Munich, Vienna, Berlin, or Dresden. How exceptionally fine they were I can affirm with a certain degree of authoritativeness, derived from the fact that I have heard them in all the four capitals above-named, performed as well as the entire resources of richly-subventioned Court-theatres would permit, and that in no case could their interpretation on the German stage claim, as far as all-round excellence was concerned, to equal that which they have lately obtained on the Old Drury boards. This was particularly the case with respect to the orchestral exponences of Wagner's descriptive music, and the two leading soloists of the vocal department, Rosine Sucher and Hermann Winkelmann. The concerted narratives recounted by the former were without exception masterpieces of tone-painting, whilst the discretion governing the accompaniments, manifested in a steadfast restraint of power, sometimes bordering upon self-effacement and always indicative of tremendous potential force held in reserve, was superlatively praiseworthy. I believe myself justified in stating that Hans Richter attaches more importance to this capacity for reticence in his noble orchestra than to any of its more brilliant or showy qualities. On several occasions he has directed my attention to its achievements in the way of fostering the voices and throwing the vocal parts into high relief wherever the great orchestras of North Germany are apt to be overmasterfully regardless of the singers' claims to be heard. Nobody could be prouder of his orchestra or of the fact that it teems with British executive talent in every one of its main branches, than is the first of living Kapellmeisters, who, having won the affection as well as the respect of all those submitted to his bâton's sway, can do just what he pleases with them. And yet it is only by dint of rehearsals, unmerciful alike in their length and frequency, that this great and genial leader has succeeded in counteracting certain unwholesome traditions, adopted by some of his best players before they joined his standard, and in inspiring his whole executant force with his own convictions anent the right and wrong ways of instrumentally giving effect to Wagner's wishes and intentions. He has worked his people to the verge of extenuation; but I venture to say, on these gifted

artists' behalf, that the result obtained has more than compensated them for the inconceivable trouble they—and he—have been put to.

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Turning from the Drury Lane orchestra to the singing-staff, I may as well at once admit that the latter has been remarkable for general and unexampled efficiency, rather than as a congregation of stars. Rosine Sucher, as actress and singer alike, is a truly grand creature. On the night of her début as Elsa she took London by storm; and the impression she made upon that occasion has been deepened by her every subsequent appearance in public, no matter whether behind the footlights at the Lane or on the St. James's Hall platform. Words fail me to express my admiration of this "cunning'st pattern of excelling nature"—a woman of imperial exterior and bearing, endowed with a voice of delicious timbre, great compass and flexibility, power and sweetness, a seraphic smile, and dramatic instincts only less remarkable than her exquisite feeling for truth of intonation. Was ever yet such an Elisabeth, Senta, Elsa, Euryanthe, or will there ever be a better? I doubt it, for absolute perfection cannot be outdone. Rosine Sucher—"Rosa" on the bills and "Manderl" in her domestic circle—is indeed a star of the very first magnitude. Winkelmann is also a star, and a brilliant one; so is Gura, a singer and actor of whom the Fatherland is justly proud. But these three constitute the chief constellation of the Franke-Pollini company, which may, however, claim to possess a thoroughly efficient representative for every part in its répertoire, consisting exclusively of works that make extraordinary demands upon the abilities of histrion and vocalist alike. I have never, even in Germany, seen and heard all the minor parts in such a colossal work as "Meistersaenger," for instance, filled up so irreproachably as they were at Drury Lane. It is certainly not to Covent Garden that we can look—that is, with any chance of finding what we seek—for such artists, in charge of subordinate rôles, as Mesdames Garsoe-Dely, Schefsky, and Wiedermann, Messrs. Landau, Ehrke, Koegel, and Kraus. True, the company is a rare coalition of talent, compounded by judicious selection from the best elements in Germany, and superior in every respect to any one of the standing Imperial and Royal companies to which its members are permanently attached. At no other time of year save that during which London holds her fashionable season, could

such a German company be gotten together under one roof, within or without the junior Empire's frontiers.

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The Wagnerian novelties produced by Messrs. Franke and Pollini were "Die Meistersaenger von Nuernberg" and "Tristan und Isolde," works offering the most striking imaginable contrast to one another—so much so, indeed, that each, considered as the illustration of an artistic principle, is the negative of the other. It was easy for any musician familiar with these two operas to foretell the result of their production in this metropolis. Nothing short of sheer vileness in the rendering could have hindered the "Mastersingers" from taking high rank in public favour here, for it teems with melody throughout, which is exactly what English audiences can appreciate and therefore like to listen to. Besides, it is a comic opera, abounding in droll situations and humorous dialogue, most appropriately set, and freer from episodes of absolute musical ugliness than any other Wagnerian opera, save and excepting only the "Flying Dutchman." The libretto is delightful reading, and there is scarcely a bar of the music that one would wish excised or altered. No other opera in existence can boast so bright and interesting a "book." The poem, from its first line to its last, is vigorous, fresh, and natural, undefaced by laborious mannerisms, and unblemished by sickly compound-words, coined to express the inexpressible. It does not subject the ear to the strain of a protracted alliterative agony like the libretto of the baneful "Nibelung's Ring," nor perplex the mind with complicated word-puzzles like that of "Tristan;" but tells a kindly, homely story—the delicate romantic flavour of which lifts its leading characters far above their prosaic life-conditions and commonplace surroundings—in good, honest, rhythmical verse. As for the music—more especially those numbers illustrative of comic situations (vocally and orchestrally)—I regard it as unquestionably Richard Wagner's greatest achievement. To be musically funny without broadening into buffoonery on the one hand or sinking into vulgarity on the other is surely one of the most difficult enterprises open to a composer. It has, however, been triumphantly carried out in the "Meistersaenger," and by one but little given to the humorous mood, if he may be judged by his other works. Daland ("Hollaender") and Mime ("Siegfried"), for instance, are the only two characters of his creation, outside the "Meistersaenger," with any pretensions

to comicality, and, although they themselves are beyond doubt disagreeably ridiculous, there is nothing funny about the music they have to sing or the Leitmotive typifying them in the orchestral score. But Beckmesser's musical utterances in all four acts of "Die Meistersaenger" are irresistibly provocative of hilarity in the audience; and so are David's, although less farcically laughter-moving than the ludicrous eccentricities and pedantic perversities of Nuremberg's vain, envious, irritable, and malicious "Town-Clerk." The ingenuity displayed by Wagner in writing the music of this part, which violates every rudimentary principle of composition, and in fitting its barbarisms, incoherencies, and absurdities to the beauties of the other parts without making any sacrifice on either side of dramatic characteristics, is little short of marvellous. It is of the "art that conceals art" that he is the greatest musical master living; and "Meistersaenger" is the chef d'œuvre of his constructive as well as of his creative feats. Up to the present time its production has been the chief event of the 1882 musical season. With it the German Opera Company has scored a more solid success than any that I remember on this side of the Channel since London was fairly electrified by Gounod's "Faust." It is as surely destined to figure amongst the standing dishes of our yearly musical ménu as "Tristan und Isolde" and "Der Ring der Nibelungen" are foredoomed to erasure from that heterogeneous bill of fare. The public took to it at once. Such scenes of excitement as I witnessed in Old Drury upon the occasions of its first, second, and third performances, are of rare occurrence within the calm and decorous regions frequented by the British habitué of Opera. There was none of that pococurante applause that owes its very suggestion to the judicious initiative of a claque, but one outburst after another of spontaneous and genuine enthusiasm, expressed in vehement calls and recalls after each act, and a deafening tempest of plaudits at the conclusion of the work.

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Upon "Tristan und Isolde," as rendered by Sucher, Winkelmann, and Gura, I dare not attempt any comment this month. In the next number of THE THEATRE I shall endeavour to deal with it as fully and carefully as it deserves. For the present I fear that even a cursory notice of the "Fidelio" and "Euryanthe" revivals will trespass inconveniently upon space that should have been devoted to something like a chronicle of June's "events" at Covent Garden

and St. James's Hall. But Beethoven's and Weber's operatic masterpieces, interpreted by so able a company as that of the "Grand German Opera," are facts of far too great importance to be ignored by a musical reviewer, however limited the space at his disposal. There are transcendent beauties in both works; there is also much that is tiresome, conventional, and redundant. With respect to the performance of "Fidelio," its meritorious features were the rendering of the overtures and accompaniments by the orchestra, the chorus singing in the first and third acts, and the Pizarro and Minister of Drs. Kraus and Gura. Fraülein Malten has a powerful voice and a fine figure—the latter something too luxuriantly rounded to admit of any delusion on the part of Marzelline with respect to Fidelio's sex. She is a handsome woman, energetic actress, and indefatigable singer; but her organ is of harsh quality and badly produced, her intonation is painfully faulty, and her gestures by no means free from affectation. She wore a ridiculous dress, utterly unsuitable to the part of an under-turnkey—a rich brown velvet tunic and knickerbockers, not unlike the æsthetic uniform in "Patience." There is no particular fault to find with Herr Wolff's Florestan; the part is an unsympathetic one, and could scarcely be rendered interesting to an average opera-house audience of the present day by a far finer actor and singer than this somewhat commonplace artist. Herr Noeldechen is a tame but tuneful Rocco, Herr Landau (the brilliant David of "Die Meistersaenger") a vivacious Jacquino, and Fraulein Wiedermann a faultless Marzelline. How Richter's orchestra played the "Fidelio" and "Leonora" overtures I must not attempt to describe. To have heard them thus gloriously rendered is an experience for which no true music lover can be sufficiently grateful.

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The revival of "Euryanthe" was an extraordinarily impressive and effective one; but that opera, I venture to predict, will never be popular in this country. Like "Lohengrin," its musical offspring, it is too diffuse to be endured more than once with anything like sustained enjoyment. As far as its plot, action, and dialogue are concerned, it is the very worst of Weber's libretti; and he, as everybody knows, was peculiarly unfortunate in his "books." The story of "Euryanthe" is more imbecile than that of "Oberon," more improbable than that of "Der Freischuetz," and

duller than that of "Preciosa." To speak plainly, it is wretched rubbish, so offensively silly as to go nigh to spoiling one's enjoyment of the admirable music to which it is set. Besides, even in the latter there are "des longueurs terribles," during which it is obvious that the composer, disgusted with the literary twaddle imposed upon him by his poet, ceased to be inspired and pursued his task altogether mechanically. With the solitary exception of Herr Nachbaur (Adolar), injudiciously cast for a part which he could neither sing nor act, all the vocal interpreters of Weber's principal operatic work were worthy of the high mission entrusted to them. Euryanthe and Eglantine are both extremely heavy and laborious parts, in which respect, as well as in their musical and dramatic characteristics, they closely resemble Elsa and Ortrud, their operatic kinswomen. As Euryanthe, Frau Sucher proved herself as competent in fioriture as in declamation; whilst Frau Peschka Leuthner, a powerful actress and accomplished vocalist, earned long and loud applause à plusieurs reprises by her spirited rendering of the highly sensational music written for Eglantine. This clever lady's voice—one of great compass, vigour, and flexibility—is of somewhat peculiar quality; its tone frequently resembles that of a fine clarionet. Dr. Gura, in the rôle of Lysiart (Telramund's prototype), made the most of a very difficult and ungrateful part, and added another important item to his long list of London successes. He has filled every first baritone part throughout the whole series of works given by the Drury Lane Company, and so efficiently as to leave really nothing to be desired. Like Betz of Berlin (who, by the way, was present at the first performance of "Lohengrin," towering above all his neighbours in the stalls), and Beck of Vienna, the extent of whose répertoires has for many years been a standing wonder to their respective admirers, Eugen Gura is an exceptionally versatile artist, gifted by nature with an extraordinary memory, a magnificent voice, and an unerring musical ear. His Hans Sachs is in every respect equal to that of Betz, which I had deemed unapproachable until I saw and heard Gura in the part. His Dutchman, on the other hand, reminded me of the younger Beck—who, unlike his illustrious father, interpreted the Hollaender as an altogether unearthly personage, forlorn of any human passion or impulse. In the rôles of Wolfram, Telramund, and Lysiart, Gura appeared to me to excel any and every one of the artists with

whom those rôles are associated in my memory. As many-sided as a brilliant of the first water, he is, indeed, a host in himself, and has rendered inestimable service to the Franke-Pollini enterprise, which is certainly indebted to him for a considerable share of the favour accorded to it by the critics and public of this metropolis alike.

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The Richter Concerts have teemed with interesting, if not with novel productions. At the third, for instance, I heard a delightful performance of Dvorák's (pronounce Dvorjacques, as in French) latest symphony—that in D major, dedicated to Hans Richter—and a magnificent rendering of Brahm's "Deutsches Requiem," the grandest, noblest, most affecting and elevating work of its kind in existence. Dvorák is undoubtedly a genius. His compositions abound in original notions, frequently beautiful and always striking, his orchestral treatment of which is extraordinarily ingenious and masterly. He seems to be never at a loss for a new melody, nor for some taking innovation in the way of arrangements, accompaniments, or combinations of instruments, that keeps his audience's attention on the qui vive, and acts as an irresistible stimulant to their spirits. The fourth of the Richter series was remarkable for surpassingly fine orchestral renderings of the additional "Venusberg" music (Tannhäuser), and of the delicious "Siegfried Idylle," as well as for Frau Sucher's début on the platform of a London concert-room. Her selection of songs was an unexceptionable one—Franz's impressive "Die Haide ist braun," and a tender love-lay by her talented husband, the Kapellmeister, who accompanied her to perfection. "Liebesglueck," as sung by the Hamburg prima-donna, took the St. James's Hall audience by storm, and elicited a vehement re-demand. It is a beautiful composition, and can scarcely fail to bring Josef Sucher's songs into vogue in English musical circles, where, like those of Jensen, Lassen, and other cotemporary Lieder-writers of transcendent merit, they are by no means as well known as they deserve to be. Another and larger work by this excellent composer was produced at the sixth Richter Concert, "Waldfraeulein," a scene or cantata composed to words selected from Zedlitz's descriptive poem, "The Woodnymph." Sucher is a disciple of Richard Wagner, and the latter's influence upon his fancy and method alike is plainly perceptible in "Waldfraeulein," one episode of which is pleasantly

suggestive of the Waldweben in "Siegfried." As "Woodweaving," however, was written at a later date than "The Woodnymph," no plagiarism can be laid to the charge of Herr Sucher, and no one would surely have the audacity to hint that the great Richard might possibly have borrowed a pretty notion from one of his most talented alumni. However that may be, there is certainly no lack of originality in the leading motivi of "Waldfraenlein," which are beautiful as well as new. It was at the sixth concert—an extraordinarily interesting one—that Richter's orchestra played Liszt's First Hungarian Rhapsody in such sort as to utterly wreck the equanimity of a supremely respectable and decorous audience, all whose congenital and conventional barriers of reticence and pococurantism were fairly overthrown and swept away by a mighty wave of heartfelt enthusiasm. It is in such spontaneous and masterful demonstrations of feeling as the one alluded to, that Richter, and the admirable artists he has been so fortunate as to gather round him, find their noblest reward for all their labour and sacrifice of time, the extent of which is scarcely even guessed at by the public at large. Results like those yielded in a greater or less degree by every one of the Richter Concerts are only attained by long, frequent, and fatiguing rehearsals, pecuniarily unremunerative alike to leader and executants. The public acknowledgment of all these pains implied in prolonged and irrepressible plaudits is one peculiarly dear to the musical artist's heart. London concert-room audiences, as a rule, are chary of it; but they have discarded precedent and broken with their traditions of reserve in favour of the Richter Orchestra with a spontaneity and downrightedness that, as I happen to know, have been the source of deep gratification to those upon whom their plaudits have been so gratefully and eagerly lavished.

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Another extremely interesting and meritorious series of orchestral concerts running through the months of May and June was that given, under the leadership of Charles Hallé, by a composite and powerful orchestra, made up of that experienced conductor's Manchester band and of judicious selections from Herr Manns' able executants. In the programmes of these six entertainments several items of the highest moment, musically speaking, were included. At the opening concert of the "Cyklus," Brahm's incomparable variations upon Haydn's "Hymn to St. Anthony"—an

arrangement of which for two pianos, by the composer, has of late achieved such extraordinary popularity amongst amateur pianists—Rubinstein's Third P. F. Concerto (magnificently played by Sophie Menter), and Beethoven's "Choral Symphony," were performed for the delectation of an audience well qualified to appreciate great works, but regrettably few in number. The event of the second concert was Svendsen's "Rhapsodie Norvégienne," a charming, fanciful, and throughout melodious composition. Three numbers of unusual attractiveness were presented at the third "Symphony," namely, Dvorák's "Rhapsodie Slave" in D, an established favourite with the London public; Berlioz's "Carnival Romain," a hopeful candidate for lasting popularity; and the "Pastoral Symphony." Schumann's "Faust" was produced in its entirety (for the first time in this country) at the fourth concert, and obtained a succès d'estime. It is, on the whole, a dull work, unconscionably long, ponderous and uninteresting. Three-fourths of it might be suppressed with advantage to Schumann's reputation, and in mercy to the musical public for which such classical chefs as Richter and Hallé cater. The remaining and last fourth is really beautiful, and will always be heard with pleasure by music-lovers. Fortunately for the audience of June 8, the dismal tediousness of the performance was relieved by the unconscious, but absolutely irresistible comicality of a Scandinavian basso-profondissimo, who looked like a mature cherub, and was vocally qualified to sing the part of Fafner in "Siegfried" without a speaking-trumpet. Every time he opened his mouth he conjured away the bored expression from people's faces as though by magic, and a pleasant ripple of happy laughter was heard throughout the body of the huge hall. But for the intermittent flashes of fun imported into the performance by this sonorous songster, our evening with Schumann's "Faust"—a baritone, like Spohr's—would have been uniformly depressing. As it was, from time to time we smiled and were glad. The chief incidents of the fifth "Symphony" were an admirable rendering of Mendelssohn's spirited Violin Concerto in E by Madame Norman-Neruda, who also played the soli in Mozart's "Haffner Serenade" most delightfully, and a fair average rendering of Berlioz's glorious "Harold" Symphony. Several members of our Royal Family, and a great musical gathering, attended this particular concert, which in every respect was the most successful one of the whole series.

Of Mr. Ganz's interesting concerts, five in number, I can say but little from personal expericnce, having only been cnabled to attend one of the scries. That one, however, was a sufficiently remarkable entertainment to call for especial and laudatory notice in this magazine, although it took place nearly a month ago. The programme was "strong" above the average, for, besides Becthoven's C Major P. F. Concerto, admirably rendered by Madame Montigny-Remaury, and two popular overtures ("Hebrides" and "William Tell"), it included Hector Berlioz's Fantastic Symphony in five movements, intituled by its author, "Episode de la Vie d'un Artiste," a work of such rare originality and amazing beauty that, although more than half a century has elapsed since Berlioz composed it, it has only as yet been performed in London three times, including the very effective rendering of it given by Mr. Ganz's excellent orchestra on the 3rd of June, 1882. As poor Berlioz—who liked and esteemed us—wrote in one of his sparkling letters, rccently published: "It is extremely difficult to get new musical ideas and methods of treatmcnt into the English public's head; but, once in, they stop there a deucc of a time!" He was right; we do not take kindly to innovations in the gay and joyous science. Glancing through the newspaper notices of the "Symphonie Fantastique" the other day, I could not but perceive that there are still doubts in the minds of morc than one leading English critic about the supremacy of Berlioz's genius over that of his principal cotemporaries, Liszt and Schumann. This appears incomprehensible to mc; but perhaps I ought not to confess my inability to undervalue Berlioz, since I myself am not altogether convinced that Wagner is the greatest musician who ever lived, a shortcoming on my part which has lately prompted some of my musical friends to accuse me of disingenuousncss, and others to dispute my sanity. There are, however, many earnest music-lovers in this metropolis besides myscIf whose reverence and admiration for Berlioz is unlimited, and who are decply gratcful to any one, be it Ganz, Hallé, or Richter, who produces his sublime and lovely creations in anything like tolerable form. A few years hence, I venture to prophesy, the five Berlioz symphonies will have attained a popularity in this country no whit infcrior to that at present enjoyed by the "tuneful nine" of Beethoven. As for thc "Fantastiquc," it is inexpressibly bcautiful throughout all its transitions from the tender to the tcrrible, the fascinating to the appalling; and Mr. Ganz deserves

great credit for reintroducing so glorious a work to his numerous and highly-cultivated musical clientèle.

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Adelina Patti has been singing several of her favourite parts as divinely as ever at Covent Garden, and bringing more grist to Mr. Gye's mill than all his other stars put together, including Pauline Lucca, whose reappearance on London boards has been a source of désillusionnement to many of her most ardent admirers. I hear of differences, however, that have sprung up between the world's prima donna and her London impresario, and deem it improbable that she will be heard in Bow Street next season. After all, she has been a heavy loser, in a pecuniary sense, by her loyalty to the Gye dynasty, for she has over and over again refused offers of engagements far more remunerative than that of Covent Garden, rather than forsake the scene of twenty-two years' successive series of triumphs. Only the other day, Pollini, who knows what he is about as well as any manager of my acquaintance, made the following proposition to her for a short season in Germany next May and June: a thousand pounds a night or half profits, whichever she pleased, if she would sing Elsa and Zerlina in German. She has, it seems to me, been seriously ruffled by one or two injudicious procédés on the part of the Covent Garden management—which, by-the-bye, has made rather a mess of its arrangements with another celebrated songstress—and, as her friends the Americans would say, "feels like cutting that connection."

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During the Diva's recent sojourn in the New World, the Steinways made her a present of a grand piano for the music-room at Craig-y-Nos, which piano they pronounce to be the finest instrument ever turned out of their ateliers. It is just now at Steinway Hall, awaiting its gifted owner's orders to be despatched to her Welsh castle, and is well worth seeing. I paid it a visit a few days ago, at her special request, and submitted it to a somewhat exhaustive trial, which resulted in my conviction that its makers have by no means overstated its merits. It is, by some inches, the longest piano I ever yet set eyes on. The case is of dark rosewood, very massive but strictly plain in fashion, though highly finished. Tone and touch alike were little short of surprises to me. The former is of heretofore unequalled power, breadth, and mellowness;

the latter incomparably deep, velvety, and delicate. There is a third pedal, by the use of which sounds may be prolonged far beyond the usual time-limit achievable through the agency of the forte pedal. The possession of such a piano should make any really fine player perfectly happy, and might well transform a bad executant into a good one, by inspiring him or her to "live up to it." Were little Galeotti let loose upon its keys there is no knowing what quaint improvisations or novel effects he might wrest therefrom. I have heard him play several times in society, with as much compassion as interest, for he is really a clever, bright little fellow, richly gifted by nature with musical instinct, whose unquestionable abilities are being frittered away in meaningless and depraving displays of undisciplined talent. The boy should be well grounded in the science of harmony, and strictly forbidden to indulge in extemporisation until he shall have mastered the rudimentary secrets of his craft. It is natural enough that, at nine years old, he should be a crude modulator and unconscious perpetrator of musical offences without number; but those to whom he belongs should give him a fair chance of becoming a great executant and composer, by timely tuition, instead of exhibiting him nightly in London drawing-rooms for money, to the detriment of his health, character, and abilities.

Wm. Beatty-Kingston.

A PICTURE-POEM.

Royal Academy, No. 71.—"Wedded" ... ... *Sir F. Leighton, P.R.A.*

NOW that I hold thee with a husband's right,
Turn thy dear head, sweet wife, and let it rest
Within my encircling arms, which thus enfold
Of earth the purest, of thy sex the best.
Let thy smile-winning lips all tremulous,
Press soft on mine a soul-enthralling kiss,
An earnest of the happy years to us,
Of unalloyed, yea! perfect wedded bliss.
So let the sunlight of thy presence shine
Athwart the future vision of my life,
Thy gentler spirit radiate through mine,
And make me worthier of thy love, sweet wife.

M. E. W.

Our Play-Box.

THE month that has just passed away may not in a theatrical sense have been very startling, but has contained sufficient interest to occupy the serious attention of the practical playgoer. I for one am thankful that Sara Bernhardt and even Rossi—with all his faults and false method—have been with us to relieve the stage from the monotony of the drama of the Dials and the comedy of Clerkenwell. Picture to yourself one of those foreign artists—whose art is to them a liberal education—one of those artists so much despised and so often ridiculed, seeking their amusement in sitting out one of the very successful cispontine dramas. Blood and thunder melodrama was once transpontine: it is now cispontine. It has crossed the Thames, and come over the bridges. It is the fashion in certain circles to say that foreigners are made welcome merely because they are foreigners, that a Frenchman is supposed to be a born actor merely because he is a Frenchman, and that there is a tendency to over-laud the stranger to the detriment of the native talent. It is a thoughtless and an unfair charge. Fechter was made welcome and had a home here because he was an artist; Jefferson would have a home here so long as he cared to live amongst us. Aimée Désclée was applauded, as Sara Bernhardt is applauded, because their art is independent of any silly, obstinate, foolish clique, and appeals to the universal world. I cannot account for tastes; I can only understand my own. For instance, I know Mr. Wilson Barrett to be a very skilful and thoughtful actor. I have admired what he has done in London as much as anyone who studies and writes about the stage. After this long distance of time I could describe all the impressions he made on me as Mercutio—the only Mercutio to satisfy my taste that I have ever seen. After this long time I could describe also with a fair amount of accuracy the thoughts he gave me as the ascetic, tender, loving monk in the poetical play "Juana," by Mr. W. G. Wills. These were impressions, and they will abide with me. But I shall remember nothing from his showy hero in "The Romany Rye," because there is little in it worth remembering. It is a part scarcely suited to an actor who has the natural ambition of an artist, and it is just possible that no one knows this

better than Mr. Wilson Barrett himself. I could put him on a low pedestal or a high pedestal. If I put him on a low pedestal "The Romany Rye" would be capital work for him. But I choose to put him on a high pedestal, and I declare that in my humble judgment he and those about him are worthy of something better than "The Romany Rye." A man who can get under the character of Mercutio as Mr. Wilson Barrett has done, and who can follow Mr. Wills so sympathetically through all his poetic periods, is worth something better than being "bashed" nightly for the edification of noisy cispontine audiences. It may make money; but it is the downfall of art. I am sometimes accused of favouring the foreigner and of ignoring the claims of the Englishman. I do not believe the charge to be true, because I know I would sooner favour the Englishman if he would only be as true to his art as the foreigner very often is.

I saw Rossi play King Lear, and I will own that he gave me no pleasure whatever. I know that, on the other hand, he gave hundreds of people extreme delight. I do not say of Rossi, "I do not like thee, Dr. Fell, the reason why I cannot tell," because I think I know why he did not delight me. He is a pantomimist, not a personator. He never suggested to me Lear, the man Lear, the human Lear, the grand Lear, the dignified Lear. He suggested to me an entertainer giving an imitation of the various passions as shown by facial expression. He makes faces; he does not act. He prepares his effects with such elaboration, and such minute care, that the point is lost on the audience. You see him preparing and leading up to every scene by his facial tricks. It is artifice, not art. He never grips his audience with the character he is playing, but shows the outward signs and trappings of the character he would like to be. Talking about Rossi the other evening, a great actor and a student of his art confirmed my impression of Rossi's pantomimical proclivities, and told me a story of a once famous tragedian who was a bit of a bully in his way, and was in the habit of practising facial expression when he was "half seas over," and registering the effect of it on a sycophantic and cowardly dependent. When the eminent tragedian was semi-somnolent after a free indulgence at the table, he would roll his eyes about and glare horribly, making faces and appealing for confirmation of his views to his never-failing Boswell. One day the actor was more tipsy than usual, and was

glaring terribly, making the most revolting faces. After a distortion of the countenance more terrible than before, he turned to his obsequious attendant and asked, "What's that?" The friend hesitated and answered diffidently, "That's hate!" "No, d——n you," roared the bully; "that's love!"

I do not care for Rossi as an actor, and I am not ashamed to confess it. I saw him on his first visit to England; I have seen him on his second. My opinion remains the same. Meanwhile you will ask me, if I can tax my memory so far, what I have seen during the month that has given me real pleasure and has aroused any artistic sympathies. I think I can tell you. I have seen Miss Florence St. John sing and act in "Les Manteaux Noirs," a performance excellent in its ease and graceful unconsciousness; I have seen Mr. J. L. Toole play the villainous squire—a bit of admirable burlesque and most original fooling; I have seen Miss Florence Gerard play Nan, in "Good for Nothing," a performance of exquisite sensibility, as fine in humour as it was quick in pathos; I have heard Mr. Henry Irving recite a weird poem by Eliza Cook, called "The Gamesters," with consummate artistic finish and power sufficient to bend the audience to his feet and sway them at his will; I have seen Sir Charles Young play the serious husband and Mr. C. P. Colnaghi the comedy character in "The Countess;" and I have watched with interest and attention the performance of the villain by Mr. E. S. Willard in "The Romany Rye." All these should be classified very highly in the class list of dramatic honours. But with all my admiration for these separately, individually, and collectively, I think I should give the first place of all to the scene between the sisters in "Frou-Frou," as played by Sara Bernhardt—better, perhaps, than she has ever played it before.

Yes, clearest of all in my memories of the month, the picture that on the whole has given me the greatest pleasure, is the scene between the sisters in "Frou-Frou" as played by Madame Sara Bernhardt. On a previous occasion she had played Adrienne Lecouvreur with far greater care than last year, though I have heard there were other evenings and afternoons when the opening scenes were passed over with indifference, and the full strength reserved for the death scene; she had played the Dame aux Camélias with far more variety than usual, and here received very careful and valuable assistance from her husband; she had given

us Doña Sol in "Hernani" a little disappointing to those who have seen the play at the Théâtre Français, and had interested us faintly in "Les Faux Ménages," a very silly piece; but she never acted so well or with such electric force as in this scene in "Frou-Frou." It was an inspired moment, and she thoroughly carried away her audience. M. Damala—or Jacques Darrell, as he is called on the stage—will in time make a very excellent actor. Already he has appearance, dignity, and decision, and considerable latent power, as was seen in his denunciation of Marguerite Gautier in the "Dame aux Camélias." The bad style he had contracted as an amateur is wearing away, and he has the advantage of the advice and experience of a consummate artist.

From the atmosphere and art of such plays as these to "The Romany Rye" is a change indeed. First let me give the cast of this remarkable play, which has proved, at any rate, that Mr. Wilson Barrett and Mr. G. R. Sims fully understand the public for whom they write and work. I deny neither wisdom to the one or great talent to the other: but I regret that the temper of the times will not permit them to give a more elevating entertainment.

"THE ROMANY RYE."

A New and Original Drama, in Five Acts, by George R. Sims.
Produced at the Princess's Theatre, on Saturday, June 10th, 1882.

Jack Hearne	... Mr. Wilson Barrett.	Showman	... Mr. J. Walton.
Gertie Heckett	... Miss Eastlake.	Cokernuts	... Mr. E. Griffin.
Philip Royston	... Mr. E. S. Willard.	Macarty	... Mr. W. Pearson.
Edward Marsden	Mr. R. Markby.	Curley	... Mr. Dalton Somers.
Joe Heckett	... Mr. Walter Speakman.	Capt. of Steamer	Mr. Layard.
Boss Knivett	... Mr. George Barrett.	Kiomi Lee	... Miss Masson.
Goliath Lee	... Mr. John Beauchamp.	Lura Lee	... Miss Emmeline Ormsby.
Black Nathan	... Mr. Brian Darley.	Keziah	... Miss Woodworth.
Dimity Lee	... Master R. Rivers.	Queenie	... Miss Granville.
Sol Lee	... Master Morter.	Policeman	... Mr. H. de Solla.
Jabez Duck	... Mr. Charles Coote.	Master Slive	... Mr. Horace Hodges.
Captain David	... Mr. G. R. Peach.	Miss Adrian	... Mrs. E. S. Willard.
Luke Morgan	... Mr. Neville Doone.	Mother Shipton	Mrs. Huntley.
Scragger	... Mr. F. Huntley.	Mrs. Curley	... Miss Sleven.
Ginger Bill	... Mr. H. Evans.	Mrs. Morgan	... Mrs. Steele.
Bill Smith	... Mr. W. A. Elliott.	Mrs. Knivett	... Miss N. Palmer.
	Philadelphia ...	...	... Miss Beckett.

Mr. Pinero told us the other day that he was anxious to get the scent of the hay over the footlights;" Mr. G. R. Sims is apparently earnest in his endeavour to favour us with "the smell of the slums." "The Romany Rye" is what Charles Dickens would call a "blood-curdler." In fact, it is the concentrated essence of all the terrors that ever occurred to the most vivid imagination of that gifted man, who, though dead and gone, appears to be duly appreciated by the modern dramatist. The play has been described to me as a nightmare, after reading Dickens

to take off the ill-effect of a supper of pork-chops. Take the convict business out of "Great Expectations," Orlick, and the other scoundrels; take Bill Sykes and his companions from "Oliver Twist;" mix them up with a suggestion of the grim trade of Rogue Riderhood, and the Dickensy passages that deal with the river Thames in particular and dead bodies in general; pour into the salad the cream of the famous chapter on beggars in Victor Hugo's "Notre Dame de Paris," and a sufficiency of the oil of Eugène Sue; pepper it with the smart situation of Hawkshaw, the detective, out of the "Ticket-of-Leave Man," and add to it the salt of the old hag, Frochard, in the "Two Orphans," and even then you will get no idea of this successful dramatic panorama of the papers of Mr. James Greenwood, the amateur casual. There is an attempted murder and a burglary in the first act, that ends with a free fight between gipsies and powdered footmen; in the second act we are treated to the attempted abduction of a screaming woman, a scene of delirium-tremens from the drunken burglar, who has been cracked on the head at the beginning of the play, and another free fight between the tipsy burglar aforesaid, an heroic gipsy who always turns up at the right moment, a well-dressed abductor, a sprinkling of police, and a tattered crowd from the slums of the Seven Dials. In the third act there is a slight pause, for we get little more exciting than the noise of a man tumbling out of bed in a common lodging-house, and the excitement of his wife rushing out for a doctor because the poor fellow "had got the shivers, from drinking cold water in mistake for gin." Several pictures of begging scoundrels from Mr. Henry Mayhew's "London Labour and the London Poor," an exposition of the three-card swindle on Hampton race-course, when sympathy is aroused for the swindler, who hints that "when the swells win they always want their money, but when they lose they claps us into prison," a sentiment that is received with a vociferous burst of applause that must be gratifying to the fraternity. In Act IV. the play wakes up again in good earnest. The oft-abducted girl has married the heroic gipsy, and is going off in an emigrant vessel to America with her olive-tinted husband, the repentant burglar, and a devoted cadger from the Seven Dials, when, horrible to relate, the ship steams away without the ubiquitous husband, who has been decoyed into Ratcliffe Highway by the enemies of the much-screaming wife, whose shrieks out-noise the cheering emigrants, the boatswain's

whistle, and every "spirit-stirring drum and ear-piercing fife" in the melodramatic orchestra. And now comes the fun for the young gentlemen with the white waistcoats in the stalls, and the ladies next to them with diamonds in their hair, who have besieged Bond Street to secure seats for "the best play going." A man is to be "bashed" in public. A "man-basher," I am given to understand, is an individual who, for a certain sum of money, will get any obnoxious person of your acquaintance out of the way, and secure his ultimate discovery in the river Thames, and a convenient verdict of "Found Drowned" at a coroner's inquest. This is an interesting and historical fact at a time when the Thames is currently reported to be well-stocked with "bashed bodies," the result of undetected crimes.

It has been determined by the wily Willard that Mr. Wilson Barrett shall be bashed, and bashed he is amidst as frantic applause as I have ever heard in any theatre in the fiercest days of my transpontine youth. Miss Emmeline Ormsby is employed to tempt the bashful Barrett from the deck of the emigrant vessel to the thief-haunted slums of Ratcliffe Highway. I am really not surprised that he follows her, for she is an exceedingly attractive girl, and looks singularly handsome in a costume that reminds me of a Hatton Garden piano-organ girl in her Sunday best. Two of the most repulsive villains ever seen by human eyes are awaiting the advent of poor Wilson Barrett. One is a tawny, lemon-tinted wretch, with bare arms and a tiger's expression; the other a portly monster with a bull-dog's countenance. After a few mild preliminaries in the way of fisticuffs—for the "Romany Rye" is nothing without what a prize-fighter would call his "ten commandments"—they huddle Mr. Wilson Barrett into a sack, and drag him, kicking desperately, through a narrow doorway. The scene changes to an underground cellar washed by the Thames, where Mrs. Frochard Huntley, in Meg Merrilies' attire, is seeing coffins in a charcoal fire, and discovering winding-sheets in a tallow candle stuck into a ginger-beer bottle. Whilst the crooning old hag is employed in these morbid meditations, the door opens, and in come the "bashers" with the subdued body of the wretched Barrett. He has kicked so dreadfully that they have tamed him by roping his arms. Having acquired a propensity to scream, the bashers advise Mr. Barrett to keep quiet, or they threaten to settle him with a life-preserver. So they hustle him into the next room, and bind the bounding Barrett to a hook in the wall of the slimy cellar.

Dear me! how this athletic manager does kick and plunge to free himself from the ropes. If he were only a spiritualist, or one of the Davenport Brothers, he would burst his bonds, and then, I suppose, the play would come to an end without the bashing. The bashers having departed to get a drink after their hard work with the muscular manager, leave word with Mrs. Huntley to hocuss Barrett directly he feels thirsty. A mysterious powder is accordingly poured out of a white paper, and the white-haired hag hobbles off to see how her "ducky darling" is getting on. Unfortunately for him, he has utterly failed with the Davenport trick, and he is getting a little exhausted. Whereupon Mrs. Huntley, who has flashed the candle across Wilson Barrett's eyes, turns suddenly into the late Dowager Lady Tichborne, and exhibits a propensity for discovering long-lost sons on the smallest provocation. Mr. Wilson Barrett is so like the wicked boy of this repulsive hag—which, by-the-bye, is not a very great compliment to the handsome Barrett—that Mrs. Huntley undertakes not to administer the white powder. But he must promise to malinger or sham unconsciousness—which he promptly does. Enter again the bashers, who are confident that Wilson Barrett is in a comatose condition, and at this point they deliberate whether it would not be better to crack the bashed one on the head. Mrs. Huntley, with great worldly wisdom, points out how extremely silly such a proceeding would be in regard to the verdict at the coroner's inquest. Marks of violence promote police enquiry; but a man properly bashed is, in the eyes of police and coroners, merely an unfortunate suicide. This information is greedily swallowed by open-eared pit and excited gallery. Exit the bashers and the bashed to a dead march played in the orchestra. Again the scene changes to one of the most beautiful moonlit Thames pictures ever seen. This picture saves the act from danger, for it is getting too horrible for even pit and gallery. A boat is put out, containing the murderers and the body. Mrs. Huntley stands on the edge of a barge, her white hair shining in the moonlight. There is intense silence. The whistle of a passing tug is heard going down the river. Now comes the time. Over he goes. No, indeed; one, two, three, four—out go Wilson Barrett's fists, first right, then left. Over goes basher number one; over goes basher number two. Crack on the head for basher number one; crack on

the head for his lemon-tinted companion. Into the water leaps the unbashed Barrett, and a scream of joy is heard that wakes the echoes of Oxford Street.

But the play is not nearly over. Act the last opens with a replica of the Hawkshaw scene in the "Ticket-of-Leave Man." Mr. Wilson Barrett pretends to be a drunken pilot, instead of a sleepy labourer, and snatches off his disguise after securing a compromising pocket-book. But the pathetic Miss Eastlake has to be saved from the emigrant-vessel that has suddenly struck on a rock somewhere or other, but whether at Falmouth or the mouth of the Thames I have never been able to discover. The repentant burglar and the Seven Dials cadger are also in danger of extinction, unless the heroic Barrett makes haste. The case is becoming desperate, and Miss Eastlake has persuaded the repentant burglar to pray for safety by reading a chapter out of the Old Testament; but this curious proceeding is arrested by Miss Eastlake's discovery of a missing document that poor Wilson Barrett has been hunting for all the evening. So she postpones her prayers and takes to screaming more loudly than before, louder than in "The Lights o' London," louder than when Mr. Willard tried to abduct her in the bird-cage shop, louder than when the emigrant-vessel started without her Barrett; and who can wonder at it, for is not this dauntless Barrett hacking away at the sails and masts with a hatchet and rescuing the enchanting owner of a black Newfoundland dog. Dear me! what a noise there is with all this rescue and the safety of a starved stowaway. Miss Eastlake and Mr. Wilson Barrett leap into the canvas sea from the derelict vessel, and swim to the shelter of a brave life-boat; the crowds on the shore look through telescopes and shout their loudest. The villain yells defiance against the prosperous Barrett. But over the bar comes Barrett with the rescued Eastlake, and the curtain falls upon "The Romany Rye," whereupon the fevered audience with parched throats and nerves quivering with excitement breaks away panting into the street.

"The Romany Rye" is not a play for acting. It does not demand much of the subtlety of the actor's art. Mr. Wilson Barrett is handsome and heroic; and Miss Eastlake is gentle and long-suffering. Mr. Walter Speakman has a character — the semi-inebriate old burglar—scarcely worthy of his ability. Mrs. Huntley, with rare judgment and skill, avoids the pitfalls of a very dangerous

character; and Mr. George Barrett, as the thorough-bred, downright good-hearted cockney, is a true and perfect bit of nature plucked out of the London streets. It is reality. But Mr. Willard, the "melodramatic villain" read by the light of the nineteenth century, managed in the course of the evening to show the best specimen of his art that has yet been seen. This was no ordinary stage villain—a man displaying the same kind of nature and vindictive passion throughout the piece; the man's nature and manner seemed to change with the current of the play. The scene where Mr. Willard comes on to gaze and gloat on the destruction of his foe by the terrible riverside murderers was singularly fine. It was half terror, half hate. The actor's face really seemed to grow pale and livid as he acted. He had identified himself thoroughly with the position, and felt it as Mr. Irving feels the terrible moments in plays like "The Bells" and "Eugene Aram." Although Mr. Willard was merely representing a modern melodramatic villain, there was a touch of tragedy in much that he did. People who watch Mr. Willard's face as he acts own to the serpent-like fascination assumed by such a hero of crime, and ascribe it mostly to manner, voice, and feature; but they must not forget the intensity and force that are behind them. Those who have seen Mr. Willard play King William in "Clancarty" will own to his versatility and skill. Miss Emmeline Ormsby was also admirable, picturesque, and forcible by turn. The jealous scene between the warm-blooded gipsy girl and her pale-faced rival was played with real force, and won deserved applause. There is no doubt of the success of "The Romany Rye." At the outset it was believed to be what is called "a pit and gallery piece," but there are such demands for stalls and boxes that the theatre and the libraries cannot supply them.

Those who want an honest laugh should repair as quickly as possible to Mr. Toole's Theatre to see Mr. Byron's latest burlesque, called

"THE VILLAINOUS SQUIRE AND THE VILLAGE ROSE."

A "Bucolic Pastoral," in One Scene, by H. J. Byron. Music by J. Fitzgerald.
Produced at Toole's Theatre, on Monday, June 5th, 1882.

The Squire	Mr. J. L. Toole.	Corn ...	Mr. Brunton.
Hugly	Mr. E. W. Garden.	Rose ...	Miss Emily Thorne.
Giles	Mr. H. Westland.	Mopsa ...	Miss Minnie Douglas.
Bunnion ...	Mr. G. Shelton.	Chloe ...	Miss Bella Wallis.

This amusing trifle is in the true spirit of burlesque, and the burlesque spirit is thoroughly appreciated by every member of the company, headed, of course, by Mr. J. L. Toole, whose fun is of

the most penetrating and original description. The little play is not so much a skit on Mr. Thomas Hardy's novel and the two plays founded on it, as a good-humoured and pungent ridicule of the old pastoral play, with its wicked squire, virtuous maiden, and pattern peasants, that once held the stage. Burlesque in its new modern form burlesques nothing; but this witty trifle burlesques something. With the aid of pretty girls, crowds, limelight, and music-hall tunes, the word burlesque has ceased to have any legitimate meaning. But in this pastoral Mr. Byron has revived it, and I trust he will soon follow up the good work with another play in the same direction. In Mr. Toole he has the very funniest actor of our time, an embodiment of humour, with a quick and sympathetic ear for every form of fun. Our readers will see this month a picture of this admirable comedian in the character of The Squire, but they will have no idea, without seeing the play, of the fun that Mr. Toole can get out of a slight sketch. Miss Thorne is clever also and sings capitally, and Mr. Shelton's old peasant is as good a bit of quiet burlesque acting as anyone would desire to see. At a matinée during the month was performed at the same theatre a very pretty little play altered from the French by Mr. A. A. Dowty, a writer as clever and versatile as he is sympathetic and tender, who for many years in a quiet and undemonstrative way has been amusing the public. It is called

"AFTER DARKNESS—DAWN."

A Domestic Drama in One Act, adapted from the French by Aglen A. Dowty.

Produced at Toole's Theatre, on Saturday Afternoon, May 27th, 1882.

Prosper Matthieu	Mr. William Farren, Jun.	Ethel Matthieu ...	Miss Effie Liston.
Madame Matthieu	Miss Eliza Johnstone	Ronald Spencer ...	Mr. E. D. Ward.
		Martha	Miss Bella Wallis.

The little story is one that delights actors of the Regnier, old Farren, and Alfred Wigan type. An old Frenchman is heart-broken at the loss of the daughter he idolises, and supposing her to be dead, he is induced to believe her living by one of those "pious frauds" so dear to the French dramatists. A girl exactly like her is substituted, and the doting old gentleman accepts the situation. The youngest of the talented family of the Farrens, Mr. William Farren, Junior, son of our excellent comedian, bears bravely the weight of the little play, and promises to distinguish himself not a little in the profession he has adopted. If he works hard, and he is sure to do that, he will do well, and he has I am sure a future before him as an actor of strong character. Miss Liston also played charmingly and with great intelligence in this little domestic drama.

"I have a whip that will not ker-ack!"

J. L. Toole

Of "The Wreck of the Pinafore," the less said the better.

"THE WRECK OF THE PINAFORE."

A Comic Opera in Two Acts, written by H. Lingard. Music by Luscombe Searelle.

Produced at the Opera Comique, on Saturday, May 27th, 1882.

Sir Joseph Porter	Mr. Gerald Moore.	Ralph Rackstraw	Mr. Arnold Breeden.
Captain Corcoran	Mr. J. A. Arnold.	The Middy ...	Master Arnold.
The Bo'sun ...	Mr. George Temple.	Josephine	Miss Rosa Leo.
Dick Deadeye ...	Mr. F. Clifton.	Hebe	Miss Annie Rose.
	Little Buttercup		Miss Madge Stavart.

This was an unfortunate attempt to give a sequel to Mr. W. S. Gilbert's famous opera; but possessing neither point nor humour, it failed and was soon withdrawn. The music was better, no doubt, than the book; but the whole thing was considered to be in not the best taste.

I have scarcely left myself space to say what I should like to say about "Les Manteaux Noirs" at the Avenue Theatre, hoping that my excellent friend who presides so ably over the Musical-Box would have had time to tear himself away from Wagner, and give us his musical ideas about Bucalossi. At any rate you will like to see the cast.

"LES MANTEAUX NOIRS."

A Comic Opera in Three Acts, Adapted from the French of Scribe by W. Parke and Harry Paulton. Music by Bucalossi.

Produced at the Avenue Theatre, on Saturday, June 3rd, 1882.

Don Philip of Arragon ...	Mons. Marius.	Girola	Miss Florence St. John.
Don José de Manilla ...	Mr. Fred Leslie.	Manuel	Mr. Jackson.
Don Luis de Rosamonte...	Mr. H. Bracy.	Lazarillo	Miss Hughes.
Palomez	Mr. Cushing.	Isabel...	Miss Minnie Byron.
Dromez	Mr. Chas. Groves	Clorinda	Miss F. Trevelyan.
Nicholas	Mr. C. Ashford.	Rosina	Miss Mori.
Gomez	Miss Maude Branscombe.	Beatrice	Miss Violet Russell.
		Anna	Miss Percy.
Pedro	Mr. Bolder.	Maria...	Miss Louise.
Samson	Mr. Beattie.	Guyman	Miss A. St. Clair.

This opera may be called a "new departure" in comic opera, or rather a revival of old-fashioned principles. It is, in fact, a play set to music; a good honest farce enlivened with melody. The shelves of my theatrical library are full of such opera-plays that delighted our forefathers; they were something more than vaudevilles—the basis of them was comedy, the garnishing was song. For such a purpose Scribe's famous story of "Giralda, ou La Nouveau Psyche," was the very thing for a commencement. It has been seen on the regular stage in countless forms, as "The Maid of the Mill," as "Giralda, or, Which is my Husband;" it has been played by Wright and Paul Bedford at the Haymarket; by Farren, the Leigh Murrays, Compton, and Mrs. Stirling at the Olympic; and by Mr. Thomas Thorne at the Surrey. A new school

of comedians now take the old play in hand, prominent amongst whom we find M. Marius and Mr. F. Leslie—funny both of them, and artists into the bargain. But in such a scheme the intrinsic humour of the situation requires to be contrasted with attraction, grace, and vocalisation. For such a purpose, Miss Florence St. John, the new Giralda, is invaluable. Her voice was never in better order than now, and there is an absence of all effort in her art, an innocence and unconsciousness that, after all, constitute the secret of her success. If the very clever gentlemen who consider that Miss Florence St. John has been "over-praised," had only studied the question long enough to know how contemporary artists on the foreign stage over-ogle and over-act, they might appreciate the peculiar charm of the English songstress in her new manner. The best criticism and the most concise description of this peculiar charm that I have seen occurs in "Punch." The writer says: "It is your way of playing as if what you said and did was the mere inspiration of the moment, that makes your Girola such a winning little personage." This is true, and it could not be better expressed. Miss St. John's singing of a valse melody by Bucalossi is a moment to be remembered. She reminds me in her art of Peschard, a singer not sufficiently appreciated on the French stage because she refused to ogle and "squirm." But she sang charmingly, and with great feeling and taste.

C. S.

"CUPID IN CAMP."

A Comic Drama in Two Acts, by G. C. Vernon.

Produced at the Criterion Theatre, on Monday, May 22nd, 1882.

General Lake ...	Mr. A. M. Denison.	Captain Saville ...	Mr. Lytton Sothern.
Colonel Lindsay...	Mr. W. Blakeley.	Mary Clifford ...	Miss Mary Rorke.
Major Murray ..	Mr. H. H. Astley.	Helen Wentworth	Miss Rose Saker.
Mrs. Davis	Miss M. Mortimer.		

It is not necessary to explain at length the plot of "Cupid in Camp," which is an English version of a French work. A young lady, in the endeavour to meet her lover, disguises herself in male attire, and a young officer, flying from his country in consequence of some political intrigues, is obliged to assume female habiliments. Through the various complications arising out of this exhausting and improbable arrangement, the opportunity for a good deal of fun arises. The mirth, it must be confessed, is ridiculously extravagant, and at times unseemingly boisterous, but the piece admirably serves its purpose of "playing the audience in." Food for laughter

of a not too exhaustive a kind is provided, and the piece, having the assistance of an excellent cast, succeeds. Mr. Lytton Sothern is quite at home as the disguised captain, and Miss Rose Saker is by turns shy and impudent, and always successful, as the young lady who is forced to wear an officer's uniform and adopt a manner which is foreign to her. Miss Rorke is exquisitely charming in the only serious part in the play; and a bright vivacious impersonation of an aggrieved but young and pretty innkeeper is given by Miss M. Mortimer. Such parts as fall to the lot of Messrs. Denison, Blakeley, and Astley are very inferior, but, of course, are made the most of by their representatives. A. B.

"NOBODY'S FAULT."

Written by Arthur Law. Music by Hamilton Clarke.

Produced on Monday, June 5th, 1882.

Louis Bowring	... Mr. North Home.	Miss Tozer	... Miss Fanny Holland.
Admiral Bowring	... Mr. Alfred Reed.		(Mrs. Arthur Law.)
Joe Dumbledon	... Mr. Corney Grain.	Mary Eden	... Miss Edith Brandon.

Mr. Arthur Law has been again at work for the St. George's Hall Company, and in "Nobody's Fault" has supplied a charming little play admirably suited to the respective talents of the artists, and having every prospect of a successful run. The music is by Mr. Hamilton Clarke. The plot is simple, but gives opportunity for some capital character acting. Mr. Alfred Reed is seen as an old "salt," retired from the Navy, and taken up with the engrossing pursuit of potato-growing. Mr. Corney Grain, wonderfully "made up" as Joe Dumbledon, his servant, an old soldier who has left the field for the garden, and given up the bayonet for the spade, gives one of the most clever illustrations he has yet done. Neither of these worthy veterans is possessed of a temper which can be designated "sweet," and hence the atmosphere of Rosedale Cottage is frequently troubled with storms. The only subject of agreement between them is the degeneracy of the Army and Navy of the present day, and to this effect they join in song, and make one of the best "hits" in the entertainment. Miss Fanny Holland is very clever and amusing as Miss Tozer, a benevolent spinster, on charitable deeds intent, who fleeces her friends to support her various and admirable (?) institutions. One pet project of Miss Tozer's—the utility of which must not be lightly spoken of—is the introduction of old china and Japanese screens to the cellars and attics of Whitechapel and St. Giles. Miss Edith Brandon and Mr. North Home,

as a young engaged couple, play and sing with success. Miss Brandon, in the song "Love's in a minor key," appears to special advantage. "When the sun's away," undoubtedly the best song in the piece, is well sung by Mr. Home. The words and music of this song are both admirably written.

The programme concludes with a new musical sketch by Mr. Corney Grain, entitled "Small and Early," introducing a most amusing song, written and composed by Mr. Arthur Cecil especially for Mr. Grain. This sketch might almost be called "a satire on modern society." Match-making mothers, chattering spinsters, scandal-loving matrons, modern swells, five-o'clock-tea men, and a multitude of others, all fall under the lash of his sarcasm; yet so amusingly does he treat all his subjects, with his rapid changes of voice, expression, and sudden flights to the piano, that there is not one serious face in the audience while Mr. Corney Grain occupies the stage.

"FIBS."

A Comedy in Three Acts, by Welborn Tylar.

Produced at Toole's Theatre, on Wednesday Afternoon, June 14th, 1882.

Christopher Allworthy Mr. Edwd. Price.	Sarah Bungley ... Miss T. Lavis.
Harry Fibberton ... Mr. E. W. Garden.	Mrs. Delacour... ... Miss Dora Vivian.
John Bungley ... ... Mr. F. W. Irish.	Primmins ... ... Miss Rose Evelyn.
Alice Harebell	... Miss Clara Jecks.

This is an old story, with scarcely sufficient strength or interest in it for even a one-act farce, much less a three-act comedy. The scene is laid outside the Briarfield Arms, where a young spendthrift has been living for some weeks without paying for his lodgings. In order to extort more money from his guardian he has informed the old gentleman that he is married and has a son, trusting that an attack of the gout will prevent his guardian from visiting the scene of his supposed married life. Given then a young and handsome lady who is expecting her husband, and who, with her maid, comes to stay at the same hotel as the spendthrift nephew; provide a garrulous landlady and a hen-pecked husband; present us with an artless country girl who is in love with the spendthrift; and let the guardian recover from his attack of gout, and come down to the scene of the comedy, and who shall stop the dramatist from endeavouring to extort fun from such amusing situations as might arise? But the author of "Fibs" seems to have lost himself and to have let the play take care of itself. Point after point is missed, and the dialogue of the piece is but of a feeble description.

The actors did their best with the various characters. Mr. Edward Price gave a very entertaining rendering of the part of the guardian, Mr. Irish played capitally as the landlord, Miss Clara Jecks was pathetic as the country girl, and Miss Dora Vivian was a handsome representative of the young married lady. The piece was prettily put on the stage. A. B.

"THE DOUBLE ROSE."

A New and Original Historical Play in Five Acts, by J. W. Boulding.

Produced at the Adelphi Theatre, on Saturday Afternoon, June 17th, 1882.

Duke of Gloucester	Mr. W. Rignold.	Cardinal Bourchier	Mr. C. H. Frome.
Edward IV.	Mr. E. Price.	Sir Thomas Ferrers	Mr. A. Adams.
Lord Stanley	Mr. F. Everill.	A Monk	Mr. J. Barrier.
Abbot of Westminster	Mr. A. C. Hatton.	Prince of Wales	Miss Louise Neville
Earl of Richmond	Mr. E. Sass.	Duke of York	Miss Katie Neville.
Duke of Buckingham	Mr. T. F. Nye.	Elizabeth, the Queen	Miss Sophie Eyre.
Earl Rivers	Mr. W. J. Brooks.	Elizabeth, her Daughter	Miss Agnes Thomas.
Humphrey Brereton	Mr. W. McIntyre.	Bridget	Mrs. E. H. Brooke.
Richard Stillington	Mr. F. Thorne.		

The fair promise held out by the author of "The Kingmaker," in his first play, has not been realised in his second production. Indeed, one is almost inclined to think that "The Double Rose" is the earlier written of the two pieces; for in the work under notice there is not displayed even so much knowledge of construction as was visible in "The Kingmaker," and the drama is, on the whole, not satisfactory. All that is done and said in the first three acts might easily be told in a few words, and what, I take it, is the real plot, does not actually commence until the fourth act. There is a considerable amount of well-written verse in the play, but the interest is not sustained; long rambling speeches are substituted for dramatic movement, and flowery descriptions take the place of action. Should "The Double Rose" be played a second time, the author may be asked to revise his text, and, in particular, a scene in the fourth act, in which he has thought fit to vent his feelings against the Catholic Church. Religion has no claim to discussion upon the stage, and the time has not yet come for an ex-nonconformist minister to deride the Church of Rome from behind the foot-lights. When the time does arrive, Mr. Boulding is not the man to do it. Besides, there is always another side to the question. A representative from Rome might turn round and deride the ex-nonconformist minister; and there would be no end to the discussion. It is better taste to leave such disputed points alone. The principal character was acted by Miss Sophie Eyre, who is possessed of true dramatic power and feeling, though she is as yet scarcely strong enough for the heavier passages in the play.—A. B.

Our Omnibus-Box.

THE want of logic displayed by the disciples of the modern Zolaistic school fairly takes one's breath away. They refuse to look upon the question of intense realism and commonplace horror, of squalor and savagery, and brutality and crime, when applied to modern melodrama, as entirely one in which art is concerned; but they treat it as purely a personal matter and to be dismissed with the schoolboy argument of a "tu quoque." Let me be heard. I do not deny for an instant that plays like "The Romany Rye"—et hoc genus omne—are clever: I do not deny, though I regret it, that they are intensely satisfying to the public taste: I do not deny that they are applauded with almost savage enthusiasm: I do not deny that they amuse more people than they interest: I do not deny that out of half-a-dozen who come to be stirred by them half at least laugh when they ought to cry: I do not deny that the authors of such plays possess the power and gift of close observation or that the mechanical effects they call into play are far finer than anything the stage has probably ever seen: but I do most emphatically assert that such plays in their tone, their temperament, and their method, have no affinity with art. Ugliness, depravity, baseness and squalor, gin and hags, the scum and the scamps of life are not to be included in the companionship of art. They are unlovely and to be shuddered at, not to be admired. They are to be deplored, not to be laughed at. The contemplation of them is not elevating, it is debasing. The effect of seeing them in a picturesque guise, of being appalled by their ghastliness, does not create an expression of loathing but of sympathy. When we come out of the theatre—and this is the great point—I for one, and I own it, do not feel soothed and softened by what I have seen, more gentle and tolerant towards my fellow-creatures, but with all the savagery in my nature aroused; so familiar am I with bludgeons and fights, with oaths and coarse words, with slang and sickening

sights, that I am already deadened to the wretchedness that would otherwise have saddened me. Pass through the streets after one of these plays, and you will find that the mind has grown more callous than before, that the ruffians who shout and scream and swear, are taken for granted, that beggary and drunkenness arouse no pity and no shame. It is in the province of art to elevate; are then these things elevating?

Am I, who believe, as tens of thousands before me have believed, in the regenerating power of art, in its beauty and its mission, in its power for good greater even than that of the preacher; am I, who think sincerely that the people can be reached by the playhouse nearer, quicker, and sooner than by the pulpit, to be classed with "flabby æsthetes," "mawkish sentimentalists;" to be termed super-fine, sneering, affected, rose-coloured, and scented, because I regret the introduction of one side of life to the exclusion of all others, the exposition of sin without the relief of virtue, the photograph of vice without the tender touches of virtue, the delivery over of the drama body and soul to those who are deprived of the sense of taste and who are destitute of imagination? There is a writer, the most honest and sincere of all of them, who disagrees with me absolutely, entirely, and unequivocally on the question. Let him be heard, let him be brought into court.

"It must be extremely shocking to people given over to the "flabbiest æstheticism and the most mawkish sentimentality, to find "the public prints teeming at the present moment with deeds of "violence, with crime and rascality, and things too utterly unlovely "to be thought about without a fit of hysterics. Can nothing be done "to preserve refined natures from the shocking details of massacre "and outrage which are constantly coming between the wind and the "nobility of their natures? The newspapers at present teem with "the odious details of modern barbarity all over the world. Ireland "and Egypt and the Thames Embankment supply incident after "incident which must be repugnant to men and women of delicate "organisation and artistic taste. The majority may like to know "something of the seamy side of the world they live in; but the "minority—so we are now told—have a right to be heard.

"What a boon it would be to this affected minority if a newspaper "were started which would confine its columns to that which is pretty

"and piquant in everyday history, and ignore such shocking and "revolting news as we get hourly from Egypt and Ireland. The law "and police columns might be retained, but they should be confined "completely to the misdemeanours of the upper classes. There is "something noble and elevating in the vices of the rich and well- "dressed, in the amours of duchesses and the rascality of earls. At "a period like the present, when bloodguiltiness is everywhere and "the nations of the earth are howling like caged tigers for some- "body's gore, when the overcrowded capitals of Europe are teeming "with violence and crime, and the fermenting of the masses is about "to result in revolution, we want a newspaper which will utterly "ignore all these things, and come out scented and beautiful, full of "that which is couleur de rose and delicate, and which will contain "no detail that can by any possibility cause our modern sensitive "plants a single vibration."

I quite agree with this writer in his estimate of the age in which we live. It is a terrible age; it is a savage age; it is an age destitute of reverence and respect; it is an age when chivalry is at a discount, and money is the only god; it is an age when nice questions of honour are treated with scorn, when confidences are broken, and faith can scarcely be found in any department of life; it is an age when the newspaper is a necessity, and when the newspaper only too truthfully chronicles the horrors that surround us. But what has the dramatist to do with the newspaper reporter? Has he no higher mission, no more ennobling sense of his art? Is this the time when the world is so very bitter that a smile would make it sweet—that the dramatist should give us a scowl instead? Are these the days when we turn to the theatre for relief, reaction, some ideality, a peep into an imaginative world—impossible, maybe, but still soothing—a view of higher natures and better motives, when we secretly long and hunger for the same soothing balm that Nature gives, that we should find for our amusement the horror intensified, the grossness exaggerated, the vileness of life distorted and grotesque? What a chance opens out to the dramatist in these days! What a noble opportunity of turning the current of our passions by the means of art! What a moment for persuading those who think so little, that there are lovelier things to contemplate in the world than racecourses, three-card swindlers, cadgers, bashers, murderers, swindlers, beggars, brutes, and thieves—all necessary

as a contrast in any drama, but horrible when presented in all their naked horror. It is no defence of such stunted and undergrown art to say that newspapers do the same thing. Newspapers are chronicles, not fiction; and I am surprised to find clever writers discussing an art question with the old schoolboy formula, "Yah, yah! you're another!" Other writers there are who have treated this as entirely a class question, and who consider that the people are only having their rights when they are treated to the contemplation of the supremely ugly and the bitterly brutal. Such as these sneer at everything that is gentle and refined, because they cannot appreciate it. They think it a crime if the minority is not familiar with life in its lowest form of degradation, and refuse to be edified by it. My own opinion is, that whether in Belgravia or Bermondsey, St. Giles's or St. James's, East or West, there is no mind that is not capable of higher impressions and nobler sentiments than are contained in the life that we live. The little child accustomed to dirt and depravity all its life bursts into tears when it beholds a field of flowers; the vilest ruffian is touched by a good action; the veriest hag is mollified by a tender word. The stage and the dramatist can to the roughest, the most brutal, and the least educated, supply, by means of art, that inestimable boon—the "thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."

Mr. Arthur A'Beckett writes to me as follows:—"In your very kind notice of 'Long Ago' you say 'there is one curious coincidence that so far as you know has not been touched upon.' This coincidence you point out in the following words:—'There occurs in "Odette" a very remarkable, and, so far as I know, an original scene. I mean the one at the opening of the third act, where the friend of the hero pumps an impudent and consequential man-servant as to the character of a gambling-house, extracting his information by sundry bribes or tips. . . . . Now Mr. A'Beckett's play begins with precisely the same scene. The friend of the family desires to obtain information about the gambling-house and its mistress, and he does so by pumping the servant and by tipping him. In spirit and in action the scenes are identical. I observe that a writer in "Punch" asserts that Sardou derived his plot of "Odette" from Mr. Arthur A'Beckett's story, that appeared originally I believe in "London Society." I had no idea before that the French dramatist was such an earnest student of magazine literature, but the double use of

this scene with the servant is to my mind a more curious coincidence than the similarity of the main story or plot.'

"'Long Ago' was written in 1876, being founded upon my story 'Madame La Fontaine—Troisième Etage,' published in the Christmas Number of 'London Society' in 1875. The play is merely an amplification of the tale, and the scene between the friend of the family and the waiter of the gambling-house is common to both. So were M. Sardon an earnest student of magazine literature in 1875, he may very possibly have read it.

"I have seen neither 'Odette' nor 'Fiammina,' but I read 'Long Ago' to the late Mdlle. Beatrice six years since, at a time when it appears she was playing in a version of the latter called 'Broken Ties,' and she certainly complimented me upon the originality of my little work. I may add that there are plenty of witnesses to the date of the completion of my play. It has not been altered since it was written six years ago, and has been submitted to no less than half-a-dozen of our leading actresses since 1876. All declared that they liked it, but none would venture to play it until I met Miss Hilda Hilton—you know with what a gratifying result."

"The Strolling Players," one of the best of the amateur clubs, repeated at St. George's Hall, on June 10th, their performance of "Much Ado about Nothing." As on the previous occasion, a considerably abridged version, specially prepared for the club by Mr. Edmund Routledge, was employed; and the cast was in almost every respect identical with that of the performance in April last. We are glad to be able to congratulate the club generally on a marked improvement upon their former effort, though the performance as a whole would scarcely have convinced those who doubt the policy of attempting plays of so ambitious an order with such limited resources, and deprecate the rashness that rushes in where the most experienced professional actors hesitate to tread. But boldness of this nature would at least escape censure if the results were always as satisfactory as on the present occasion; and, indeed, a performance of far less general merit would have been rendered noteworthy by the charming Beatrice of Miss Helen Maude. The delightful raillery with which "dear lady Disdain" seeks to hide the growth of her love for Benedick, her generous indignation at the unjust accusation of Hero, her impetuous urging of her lover to avenge her cousin's wrongs, were all portrayed with a wealth

Beatrice.—Against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner.

Benedick.—Fair Beatrice, I thank you for your pains.

"*Much Ado About Nothing*," *Act* 3, *Scene* II.

of intention and a variety of expression rare indeed in an amateur. The steady development of Miss Maude's conspicuous talent cannot fail to have been welcomed with pleasure and watched with interest by those who bewail, not without reason, the present dearth of English actresses; and her performance of Beatrice will confirm the impression that a distinguished position would be at her command should she join the ranks of the professional stage. Her efforts were worthily seconded by Mr. Routledge, whose impersonation of the good-humoured Benedick was consistently intelligent, spirited, and graceful. As Claudio, Mr. C. H. Lamb acted carefully, but the denunciation of Hero, in the church scene, suffered somewhat from his lack of dramatic power. The Leonato of Mr. Claude Penley was wanting in variety, and his grief went perilously near the verge of burlesque; and Captain Fitz-George and Mr. G. M. Allen are not altogether to be blamed for the fact that the scenes in which Dogberry and Verges are concerned fell a little flatly. One of the best-acted of the minor characters was the Borachio of Mr. W. W. Lewis. As Hero, Miss Vyvyan showed some promise, though the expression of pathos is as yet somewhat beyond her means. The stage-management was fairly good, and the waits commendably short. During the evening, Mr. Routledge made the gratifying announcement that, as the result of the performance, the club would be enabled to hand over to the distressed lady for whose benefit the entertainment was organised, the large sum of one hundred pounds.

The dramatic Pharisee has been particularly prominent of late. He has made broad his phylacteries, and thanked God he was not as other men are. He has turned up his eyes to heaven and waxed eloquent on the subject of ballet-girls' skirts. He has preached about morality aloud, and from the house-tops, and regarded the evils to which the stage and the drama are subjected from the narrowest and most superficial point of view. In the opinion of the dramatic Pharisee, the mere mention of sin on the stage is immoral, and he argues that to describe a wicked woman in order to allow her to point a moral and adorn a tale, is to set an evil example, and to teach people how to sin. A bad woman who repents is an eyesore to such men as these, who omit to see that far more harm is done by the insidious suggestion of immorality under the cover of fun than by the bold exposition of immorality for the sake of an example. One of the most beautiful stories ever told in its

simplicity, truthfulness, and divine charity is that of the Magdalen: "Let those who are without sin amongst you cast the first stone!" Is this story immoral, then, because it has for its heroine a woman who has sinned; is repentance a crime; is pardon a questionable policy? Once, however, let a dramatist take an erring woman as a type, and we are overwhelmed with essays concerning distasteful subjects and pernicious examples, about French nastiness, covert immorality, and so on. We are asked to roar with laughter when every detail of intrigue is contained in a farce; but are invited to be very shocked when the result of intrigue is put forward in a play.

Has the dramatic Pharisee, I wonder, ever read the famous preface to the second edition of Charlotte Brontë's "Jane Eyre," when this upright and outspoken lady dedicated her so-called indelicate story to Thackeray:

"To that class in whose ears whatever is unusual is wrong; whose ears detect in each protest against bigotry—that parent of crime—an insult to piety, that regent of God on earth, I would suggest to such doubters certain obvious distinctions; I would remind them of certain simple truths. Conventionality is not morality. Self-righteousness is not religion. To attack the first is not to assail the last. To pluck the mask from the face of the Pharisee is not to lift an impious hand to the crown of thorns. These things and deeds are diametrically opposed; they are as distinct as vice from virtue. Men too often confound them; they should not be confounded; appearance should not be taken for truth; narrow human doctrines that only tend to elevate and magnify a few should not be substituted for the world-redeeming creed of Christ. There is—I repeat it—a difference; and it is a good and not a bad action to mark broadly and clearly the line of separation between them."

These words, these stirring and truthful words of a pure woman occurred vividly to my mind when I read the accounts of a play called "The Countess," written by Lady Monckton, and founded on a drama by Bélot, which was originally produced at the Shelley Theatre on the Thames Embankment, and subsequently transferred to the Prince of Wales's Theatre at a morning performance in aid of a charity. If my experience had not taught me to accept certain

strictures with reserve, here surely was a play calculated to make every decent person blush to the roots of their hair. I was told that it was effective, but that its motive was vicious. I heard a great deal about its "low standard of morality" and its "unwholesomeness," opinions in which I might have placed some faith had it not been for the gratuitous insult and impertinence of the remark that "aristocratic audiences will tolerate incidents from which more simple-minded playgoers turn with a feeling of disgust." Such is not my experience at all. If the "simple-minded playgoer" is the same kind of Pharisee who by his presence encourages the low ribaldry and double meaning of the modern music-hall song, I really do not think he has a right to lecture the aristocracy or anyone else on a "low standard of morality." An "aristocratic audience," if indeed there is any meaning in what Polonius would call "a vile phrase," is presumably an audience of refined and elevated tastes, and such as these are the last people who would deliberately encourage what was unworthy and vicious. They would loathe the hideous suggestiveness of the minstrelsy of the music-hall, and have already done all in their power—as instanced at the Victoria Palace Music Hall—to promote a better, a purer, and more wholesome form of entertainment.

For after all, what is the story of "The Countess"? It is the story of a repentant woman, scarcely to be understood by those who are ignorant of French custom and the French marriage-law; the mainspring of it being clearly misunderstood by those who are in such a hurry to condemn that which they have not the power to analyse. A young girl just released from a convent, ignorant of the world and its ways, untaught and unformed, a mere baby in experience, is married—according to detestable French custom—as a convenience to a man for whom she has not one spark of affection. It is a marriage of convenience and nothing more; it has no sacred character in it. What then does the man do, who has bought his wife just as he would buy his horse, or his carriage, or any other ornament? He leaves her to herself, without protection, without guidance, and without counsel, and buries himself abroad in a distant consulate. During his absence this young and inexperienced woman—who presumably has the "passions of her kind"—comes under the spell of an unprincipled villain, and a

child is born during her husband's absence. It is a sin, no one doubts it. It is a terrible sin, not lightly to be considered; but, in the category of sin, it is not, under the circumstances, more blameworthy than that of the innocent and virtuous girl at home who is ruined by a thoughtless scoundrel. The marriage in this instance was one in name only; it did not exist in fact. When the husband returns, after his long and unjustifiable absence, the distracted woman, who has bitterly repented, in tears and agony, has to conceal her crime and the evidence of it; and, to make matters worse, as time goes on, she loves and is loved by her husband. What a deplorable position, but still dramatic. A mother deprived of the society of the child she loves in order to keep the love of the husband she has injured. There is no sign in the play of a suggestion that the woman's fault is a light one; but she has repented, and there is presumably forgiveness for a Magdalen of any grade. To say that the fault is condoned is to say what is not the fact. Circumstances occur which reveal the secret—so sacredly kept—to the husband, who having been wounded in a duel, dies, concealing by a pious fraud the sin of a woman he has loved and who has repented. It seems to me that there is something noble in the conduct of the husband who courts death sooner than a life of dishonour, and who with his dying breath shields the repentant woman from the scorn and contumely of an indignant world. But this I am told is an immoral story.

The same kind of situation occurs to me as having happened not so very long ago in real life, or at any rate the life that we live in now in the nineteenth century, which is supposed to be so very different from life in France—so very strict and pure. A young officer, just before sailing with his regiment for one of the recent wars, discovered by accident that the wife he loved passionately and blindly had been unfaithful to him. He said nothing. He kept the secret religiously locked in his breast. The only difference about him was that he was very sad, very despondent, and not like himself. He left England, and went away on his duty. He parted from his wife without telling her what was in his heart. On the eve of his very first action he told his friends he had a presentiment that he should be killed. He went into action at the head of his men, and, rushing forward in the most reckless and foolhardy manner,

received the first bullet through his heart. His friends knew why. But by his death he saved the woman he loved and who had dishonoured him. Would this, then, be an immoral story if it formed the body of a play, the theme of a novel, the subject of a poem? I hope not, for I shall try my hand on it for some verses, at any rate.

One more example. There is that terrible story whose scene is the Château of Ottensheim, near Linz in Vienna, that ghastly picture of the faithful but betrayed woman and her still more faithful friend lying dead among the garden roses outside the window of Count Henry Coudenhoven. Poor Marie Damain! Poor little friend who would not allow even death to sever the friendship! Often in London I have seen and appreciated the talent of this charming lady who "loved not wisely but too well;" little did I ever think she would be the heroine of such a tragedy. It seems to me the idealisation of love: the perfected example of [illegible] honour and faithfulness. But Marie Damain sinned you [illegible] her life record, so touching, so true, such a sad warning [illegible] ible example, would be an "immoral story" according [illegible] the "dramatic Philistine."

I saw [illegible] "Countess," when she appeared at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, and, though I own that the subject is gloomy enough—Adolphe Bélot must have a morbid nature—I cannot conscientiously call it immoral, for I really do not think it is so. The stage is being ruined by the bread-and-butter doctrines of milk-and-water philosophers, and by the broadened phylacteries of Pharisees. I admired very much the acting of Lady Monckton, Sir Charles Young, and Mr. C. P. Colnaghi; the genuine comedy spirit of Mr. Colnaghi, light, natural, and unaffected, was as good as anything I have seen on the amateur stage since Mr. Brandram left it, and a great deal better than much that I see on the professional stage. Sir Charles Young is an actor of fine and accomplished dramatic spirit. His bright nervous temperament and polished elocution are invaluable for such characters as these. If acting is ever to be considered an art again, and the drama of fisticuffs and pugilism is to die a natural death, we shall admire the mental qualities of the kind of acting which Sir Charles Young shows here, and Mr. Henry Neville gave us the other day in

"Money," as revived at the Vaudeville. It is sound, honest acting —not temporising, coquetting, and mumbling over a part.

As our frontispiece this month is an admirable photograph of Mr. Charles Wyndham and Miss Mary Rorke as Mr. Peregrine Porter and Angelica Porter in "Fourteen Days," we briefly record the theatrical career of the two artists. Mr. Wyndham made his first appearance on the stage in 1861 at the Olympic Theatre, New York. After doing duty as a surgeon in the Civil War in the Southern States, he appeared for the first time in London on May 21st, 1866, acting Sir Arthur Lascelles in "All that Glitters is not Gold" at the Royalty Theatre. In April of the year following he played Hugh Stoneleigh in "Idalia," under the management of Miss Herbert, at the St. James's Theatre. At Wallack's Theatre, New York, he acted Charles Surface in "The School for Scandal" on September 15th, 1869. Returning to London, Mr. Wyndham played various engagements, and undertook the management of the Criterion Theatre. "Pink Dominoes," Mr. James Albery's adaptation of MM. Hennequin and De Najac's notorious play, was produced here on March 31st, 1877, with Mr. Wyndham in the part of Charles Greythorne. On February 8th, 1879, Mr. Bronson Howard's three-act comedy of "Truth" was brought out with Mr. Wyndham as Mr. Alfred Sterry. On August 6th, of the same year, Mr. Burnand's clever play, "Betsy," was presented at the Criterion, and on November 20th, 1880, Mr. Wyndham played Sir Garroway Fawne in the first performance of "Where's the Cat?" His next character was that of Montague Leyton in Mr. James Mortimer's adaptation of M. Sardou's "La Papillonne," entitled "Butterfly Fever," produced on May 17th last year. In "Flats," which was brought out on August 23rd, he did not act. His next character was that of Frederick Foggerty in the performance of "Foggerty's Fairy" on December 15th. "Fourteen Days" was produced on March 4th, and is still running as successfully as ever, thanks to Mr. Byron's wit and to Mr. Charles Wyndham's unflagging spirits.

Miss Mary Rorke, who was born at Westminster, entered the theatrical profession in 1874, during which year she played at the Crystal Palace and at the Croydon Theatre. Under Mr. Horace Wigan's management she made her début on the London stage at

the Mirror Theatre, Holborn—afterwards known as the Duke's—in a small part in "Maids of Honour." She next went to the Haymarket Theatre to play Sophie Crackthorpe in "The Wedding March." She then went through some trying work during an eight months' stay at the Prince of Wales Theatre, Liverpool; and thence she joined the company at the Court Theatre, playing Fanny Bunter in "New Men and Old Acres." Miss Rorke then returned to the Haymarket for a short season, and this engagement was followed by one with Mr. Charles Wyndham. She opened at the Criterion as Meg in "Meg's Diversion." She has since played there, amongst others, the following characters: Mrs. Dorothy Sterry, in "Truth;" Carrie Dalrypple, in "Jilted;" Mrs. MacManus, in "Betsy;" Florence, in "Verbum Sap;" Dagmar, in "Where's the Cat?" Dorine, in "Brave Hearts;" Jennie Talbot, in "Foggerty's Fairy;" Angelica Porter, in "Fourteen Days;" and Mary Clifford, in "Cupid in Camp." Miss Rorke's acting is marked by an evident seriousness of purpose and study, and she is always ineffably sweet, touching, and sympathetic.

Mrs. Langtry's tour in the provinces has been one continued record of triumph and success. From Edinburgh she passed to Glasgow, and thence to Liverpool, where, at the Alexandra Theatre, she attracted audiences only to be measured by the capacity of the large theatre. For her seven performances in this city she received a cheque for eleven hundred pounds. She was greeted with enthusiasm in the theatre, and at nights, when returning to her hotel, crowds of ardent admirers waited—even in the drenching rain—to cheer her. Mrs. Langtry has made "An Unequal Match" her principal attraction in the country, and the choice is a good one. Her exquisite acting as the rustic beauty in the first act of Tom Taylor's play is only excelled by the pretty pathos of the second act, and the charming comedy which she infuses into the last scene of the piece. Mrs. Langtry is now bestowing her attention upon Shakespeare's Rosalind, with a view to acting that part during her next provincial tour. Her present tour terminates at Nottingham, on July 22nd. Owing to Mrs. Langtry's great success in the provinces she has under good advice determined to visit the United States at once, and has accordingly accepted a valuable offer for a series of performances in America, to commence this year at "the fall" or autumn, when the New York theatres open again.

Mrs. Langtry was to have appeared in "The Overland Route" at the Haymarket in September, but Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft have very kindly released her from her engagement, or rather postponed it until the American trip is over.

A hasty charge has been made against the management of the Avenue and other theatres, in connection with plays that have been recently passed by the Examiner of Stage Plays. After laughing at the Examiner of Plays for passing the "Nibelungen," "Odette," and "Les Manteaux Noirs," the article says in so many words that the authors of "Les Manteaux Noirs" have deliberately inserted "coarse" lines and "objectionable matter," and that the actors and actresses are responsible for permitting at "daily rehearsals" that which has "escaped the Licenser." A stronger sentence or a more sweeping charge than the following I do not think I have ever read. "As long as actors and actresses can allow anything coarse that may have escaped the Licenser to pass muster at daily rehearsals, they must not be surprised if their social status continues to be equivocal. The author of the libretto should never have written the objectionable matter." Now I have listened with great pleasure to this opera of "Les Manteaux Noirs," and I do not recollect one word, syllable, or sentence that could offend the most scrupulous. Furthermore, I do not believe Mr. Harry Paulton, one of the authors of the libretto, to be capable of writing or publishing anything "coarse" or "objectionable."

As many people believe that "there's many a true word spoken in jest," it seems to me that a writer who makes such statements is bound to substantiate them. Charges are easily made, as I have found to my cost; they are not so easily proved. Let us hear why "Odette" should have been denied a license; let us have the "ipsissima verba" of the coarse and objectionable matter in "Les Manteaux Noirs"—matter that is said "to go too far for the reputation of the theatre." The author of such charges is doubtless conscientious; but there may be conscientiousness also in those who manage, those who write, those who act, and those who have witnessed and are still witnessing two of the most successful plays recently produced in London. I do not believe Mr. or Mrs. Bancroft to be capable of submitting any play for license concerning

which there could be the slightest question, nor that Madame Modjeska and her companions of the theatre would study any subject of doubtful tendency.

Mr. Bucalossi, the composer of that celebrated valse, "My Queen," has made a great success with "Les Manteaux Noirs" at the Avenue Theatre, where, as I expected would be the case, the theatre is crammed every evening. Why wonder at it? The play is amusing and highly vigorous; the music is gay and charming; the acting and singing are just what the public requires. It is popularly supposed that Mr. Bucalossi is an Italian pure and simple, but this is not the case. His father was an Italian, but his mother was English, and England has for years been the new composer's home. "Les Manteaux Noirs" has made such a hit that I should not be surprised if Mr. Bucalossi were encored at the Avenue Theatre.

I do not suppose that Henry Irving ever had a more devoted admirer, or one who better represented intelligent young England, than a genuine, warm-hearted Eton boy who has been in pleasant correspondence with me for some years past, and has done me the honour to consult me on matters connected with the stage and his own general reading. I have never seen the lad, never set eyes on him; but his letters, so full of intelligence and enthusiasm, are amongst my most treasured possessions. His Eton career is over, and my young friend—and I know I may call him so—is studying in Germany for the brilliant career that I have little doubt is before him. I have just received a letter so full of interest in all matters connected with the stage, that I do not hesitate to quote one passage that explains, in his own simple words, a sentiment that has a very wide and natural expression: "I hear vague rumours of Mr. Irving and the Lyceum company going to America in 1883. Now, Mr. Editor, this should not be. London cannot do without its best company and the most artistic manager in the world; and I really think that some sort of protest should be made against this 'new departure.' It may be very selfish, but I very much grudge the Americans the pleasure in store for them, and I am sure I am not the only one who does so. What an awful outburst of wrath and virtuous indignation there was when that much-loved animal, Jumbo, went to America? Surely

the departure of the Lyceum company should rouse some indignation in the breast of those who love the drama well! I hope someone will protest either through the columns of a daily paper or through yours." The generous feeling and the naïveté of these remarks need no comment at my hands. I would stake my life on their sincerity and simple faith.

Why do people always look on the worst side of things, and not on the brightest and the best? Is there a living creature on or off the stage who objects when a friendly compliment and a testimony of good-will is offered to such a man as Mr. J. L. Toole? Seriously, is it possible that there are people who grudge the right hand of fellowship being extended to that emphatically "good fellow," whose time and money, heart and soul, have been at the service of his brother and sister actors ever since he has been on the stage? Mr. Henry Irving does not think so; Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft do not think so; Mrs. Keeley, Mrs. Kendal, and Miss Ellen Terry do not think so; Mr. Sims Reeves and his son Herbert scorn such an idea; Mr. Santley allows no such notion to enter his head. Had it been possible to extend this magnificent list of names, I believe that Mr. Toole's benefit, as it is technically called, would have lasted a week instead of one morning and one evening on Saturday, July 1st. Of course Mr. Toole does not want a benefit, but his brother and sister artists do want to pay him a little compliment, and the public and Mr. Toole's friends equally desire occasionally to show some mark of their personal esteem for so unselfish and so good a man. This is why Mr. Toole takes a "complimentary benefit," because his friends desire to pay him the compliment he has deserved. In addition to the names I have mentioned, Madame Amadi, in whom will be recognised a very favourite actress, will re-appear and play Wellhelmina in "The Waterman," singing, as she will sing, with charm and feeling, the famous old English song, "Wapping Old Stairs." Mr. Henry Irving is to recite Eliza Cook's "Sacrilegious Gamesters" again, so do not let anyone miss that treat; and Miss Ellen Terry will, for the first time, recite Hood's "Bridge of Sighs."

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The Theatre.

AUGUST, 1882.

THE PRIZE COMEDY.

By Dutton Cook.

IT was generally held that Mr. Benjamin Webster was doing a very liberal thing when, in 1843, as manager of the Haymarket Theatre, he offered a prize of five hundred pounds, "with contingent advantages," for a new and original English comedy. For some time the drama had been at a low ebb successful plays were not forthcoming; it was urged that authors of capacity were not encouraged to write: they were tendered such poor prices for their compositions, the managers had become so niggard and so unenterprising. And then the stage was deluged with translations and adaptations from the French; for native talent there seemed no room, the original producer stood no chance. As Mr. Boucicault has stated of late years in an autobiographical letter to Mr. Charles Reade: "I was a beginner in 1841, and received for my comedy, 'London Assurance,' three hundred pounds. Three years later I offered a new play to a principal London theatre. The manager offered me one hundred pounds for it. In reply to my objection he remarked: 'I can go to Paris and select a first-class comedy; having seen it performed I feel certain of its effect. To get this comedy translated will cost me twenty-five pounds. Why should I give you three hundred or five hundred pounds for your comedy, of the success of which I cannot feel so assured?' The argument was unanswerable, and the result inevitable. I sold a work for one hundred pounds that took

me six months' hard work to compose, and accepted a commission to translate three French plays at fifty pounds apiece." It was a complaint at this time, and for some years afterwards, that dramatists, in comparison with novelists, were but poorly rewarded for their labours. Mr. Wilkie Collins discussed the subject in one of the earlier volumes of "Household Words," and afterwards reprinted his paper in the first edition of the work called "My Miscellanies." But the whirligig of time has reversed the order of things upon which Mr. Collins expressed himself, and has given the dramatist ample revenge. He no longer needs to be condoled with touching the smallness of his profits. Nowadays the writing, or even the adapting, of a play is a far more remunerative occupation than is the writing of novels. What with his London, provincial, and American rights, his receipts "by the run," and the innumerable representations of his work, the producer of a successful drama is as the inheritor of a fortune; while that old institution, once so esteemed and cherished of the circulating library, the three volume novel, now leads but a struggling sort of life, and is even threatened with absolute extinction. From later issues of "My Miscellanies," Mr. Collins has excluded the paper in question, finding it, however ingenious and interesting, now altogether inapposite, obsolete, and erroneous.

A committee was appointed to examine the plays sent to the Haymarket for approval, to decide upon their merits and to award the prize. The tribunal was thought to be admirably constituted, thoroughly competent and impartial. Charles Kemble, the Lord Chamberlain's Examiner of Plays, was appointed chairman of the committee. The other members were the retired tragedian, Charles Young; Mr. E. R. Moran and Mr. Henry Ottley, critics and connoisseurs; Mr. J. C. Searle, dramatist and associate of Mr. Macready in his theatrical managements; Mr. G. P. R. James, the voluminous novelist; and the Rev. Alexander Dyce, the editor of Shakespeare, etc. The comedies were, of course, sent in anonymously. The committee were supposed to be entirely ignorant of the names of the authors upon whose works they were required to pronounce. In all ninety-seven works were received, or four hundred and eighty-five acts! The committee had an arduous task before them.

In a letter to Douglas Jerrold, dated 13th June, 1843, Charles Dickens writes very humorously on the subject of Mr. Webster's

prize of five hundred pounds. Jerrold jestingly had credited his friend with an intention to abandon his novel of "Martin Chuzzlewit," upon which he was then engaged, and to compete for the reward. "Yes," replies Dickens, "you have anticipated my occupation. Chuzzlewit be d——d! High comedy and five hundred pounds are the only matters I can think of. I call it 'The One Thing Needful; or, A Part is Better than the Whole.' Here are the characters:

Old Febrile ... ... Mr. Farren.	The Duke of Leeds... Mr. Coutts.
Young Febrile (his son) ... Mr. Howe.	Sir Smivin Growler ... Mr. Macready.
Jack Hessians (his friend)... Mr. W. Lacy.	Servants, Gamblers, Visitors, etc.
Chalks (a landlord) ... ... Mr. Gough.	Mrs. Febrile ... ... Mrs. Gallot.
Hon. Harry Staggers ... Mr. Mellon.	Lady Tip ... ... Mrs. Humby.
Sir Thomas Tip... ... ... Mr. Buckstone.	Mrs. Sour ... ... Mrs. W. Clifford.
Swig ... ... Mr. Webster.	Fanny ... ... Miss A. Smith.

"One scene," he continues, with an eye to certain of the stage tricks and peculiarities of Mr. Farren, "where Old Febrile tickles Lady Tip in the ribs, and afterwards dances out with his hands behind him, his stick before, and his eye on the pit, I expect will bring the house down. There is also another point where Old Febrile, at the conclusion of his disclosure to Swig, rises and says: 'And now, Swig, tell me, have I acted well?' And Swig says: 'Well, Mr. Febrile, have you ever acted ill?' Which will carry off the piece!"

He discusses Herne Bay, whither Jerrold has retreated, and the hideous horrible misery of London in a cold wet June, and then resumes: "But I have my comedy to fly to—my only comfort. I walk up and down the street at the back of the theatre every night, and peep in at the green-room window, thinking of the time when 'Dick—ins!' will be called for by excited hundreds, and won't come till Mr. Webster (half Swig and half himself) shall enter from his dressing-room, and, quelling the tempest with a smile, beseech that wizard, if he be in the house (here he looks up at my box), to accept the congratulations of the audience, and indulge them with a sight of the man who has got five hundred pounds in money, and it is impossible to say how much in laurels. Then I shall come forward and bow once, twice, thrice—roars of approbation—brayvo, brarvo—hooray, hoorar, hooroar—one cheer more; and, asking Webster home to supper, shall declare eternal friendship for that public-spirited individual. I am always, my dear Jerrold, faithfully your friend, 'The Congreve of the Nineteenth Century' (which I mean to be called in the Sunday papers)."

A postscript was added: "I shall dedicate it to Webster, beginning: 'My dear Sir,—When you first proposed to stimulate the slumbering dramatic talent of England, I assure you I had not the least idea,' etc., etc., etc."

It need hardly be said that Dickens's comedy, "The One Thing Needful," with its precise cast of characters, and the curious specimens of its dialogue and stage business, existed only in his own jocose and satirical imagination. He had accurately described, however, the kind of comedy that was likely or certain to be submitted from various quarters to the examination of the committee. It is doubtful now whether he designed the Mr. Macready of his cast to be recognised as the famous tragedian of that time, or whether he did not rather refer to a very subordinate actor of the same name, who, on that account it was said, and to occasion some annoyance to the real and genuine Mr. Macready, had been specially engaged at the Haymarket, and nightly entrusted with very humble duties upon its stage. Whether Jerrold was himself a competitor for the prize has not been disclosed. He may well have been, for he had often been content to receive a very inferior sum to five hundred pounds as the price of one of his plays.

Presently the committee decided in favour of a comedy entitled "Quid pro Quo; or, The Day of Dupes," and this was found to be the work of Mrs. Charles Gore, who then enjoyed considerable popularity as a novelist, and was known to have contributed to the stage one or two dramas of minor note, adaptations from the French. At a later date Thackeray satirised the lady in "Punch:" one of his "Novels by Eminent Hands," "Lords and Liveries," by the authoress of "Dukes and Déjeûners," "Hearts and Diamonds," "Marchionesses and Milliners," etc., ingeniously mimicked the romances of high society and fashionable life with which she was wont to keep the circulating libraries well supplied. Mrs. Gore's writings pleased a large class, however, and in regard to wit and liveliness possessed undoubted merit. Her "Cecil; or, The Memoirs of a Coxcomb"—Beckford, of Fonthill, was said to have helped her to the classical quotations and allusions with which the book is adorned—can afford comparison with the best novels of the dandy class, the school of the authors of "Pelham" and "The Young Duke."

The winner of the prize had many difficulties to encounter. Public expectation had been greatly excited; too much was hoped

from the prize comedy. And then the ninety-six disappointed candidates had to be taken into account. Of course these formed a strong chorus of dissentient and dissatisfied voices, impeaching the judgment of the committee, and even accusing them of unfair conduct in the matter. After all, as in her preface to the published play Mrs. Gore reminded the public, the offer of a premium "could create no new talent among the existing dramatists of the day." And the rejected authors who combined to disparage the prize comedy had to concede that their own productions were in the unanimous judgment of the committee of even inferior merit to "Quid pro Quo." Mrs. Gore also held, probably with little-enough warrant, that the fact of her sex operated against the prospects of her play. On this account she had hoped to preserve her anonymousness until after the first night of performance. But her handwriting was known to "a literary gentleman connected with the theatre," through whom, after the adjudgment of the prize, the secret oozed out with results the lady held to be most injurious to her play and disagreeable to herself. "For," as she wrote, "the animosity on the part of the pit and the press—the dramatic critics of the newspapers being almost without an exception rival dramatists—which succeeded in condemning the very superior plays of Joanna Baillie, Lady Dacre, and Lady Emmeline Wortley, could scarcely fail to crush any attempt of mine."

Further injury to the comedy was supposed to have resulted from the refusal of Mr. Charles Mathews and Madame Vestris to undertake the parts proposed to them by the committee, for the casting of the play seems to have been within the function of that body, and in the place of those admired performers it became necessary to assign to Mr. Buckstone and Miss Julia Bennett the task of personating Captain Sippet, "a tuft-hunter," and Lady Mary Rivers, the daughter of the Earl of Hunsdon. "But," observed Mrs. Gore, "I have the more to thank the concession of Mr. Farren, who, notwithstanding the prohibition of his physicians, kindly consented to take a secondary part rather than allow an attempt towards the revival of English comedy to lack his powerful and zealous assistance."

"Quid pro Quo" failed to please. The first performance of the prize comedy was indeed received with a storm of disapproval. Yet a brilliant audience had assembled upon the occasion. On this

score Mrs. Gore had no complaint to make. "Were the boxes often filled, as I had the gratification of seeing them for the first representation of "Quid pro Quo," with those aristocratic and literary classes of the community who have absolutely withdrawn their patronage from the English stage, for their more refined pleasure a new order of dramatic authors would be encouraged to write and of performers to study. But no one familiar with the nightly aspect of our theatres will deny that they are supported by a class requiring a very different species of entertainment; for whose diversion exaggeration in writing and acting is as essential as daubing to the art of the scene-painter." Clearly Mrs. Gore had not attempted to produce a work of literary or dramatic pretence, had indeed designedly forborne any such effort; she had addressed herself to an uncultivated class, and written down to her public. "Now that professional distinctions are extinct," she continued, "and the fusion of the educated classes has smoothed the surface of society to a railroad level, a mere daguerreotypic picture of the manners of the day would afford little satisfaction to play-goers accustomed to the disproportion and caricature *established into the custom of the stage* by the exigencies of our colossal patent theatres." As a dramatist, therefore, she had attempted a broader style than had characterised her writings as a novelist. She had laboured to produce in the interest of the theatre an acting rather than a reading play, "a piece likely to provoke the greatest mirth of the greatest number, and reward by overflowing audiences the spirited liberality of the manager." Unfortunately the public were not taken into the dramatist's confidence. Expectation prevailed that instead of "a bustling play of the Farquhar or George Colman school," the prize-drama would prove to be "what is termed a high-life comedy, a style of piece which the experience of the last twenty years had proved to be wholly ineffective on the modern stage." And certainly this expectation was encouraged by the prologue, delivered by Mr. Webster, in which the comedy was described as representing "Life as it is and manners as they go." The old stock plays, made up of tie-wigs, stiff brocades, and trite moralities, were obsolete, it was urged.

> To-night our cost and care,
> Would picture English manners as they are;
> Be yours the kind requital of our task,
> A patient audience is the boon we ask, etc., etc.

But assuredly the comedy of "Quid pro Quo" pictured life and manner most farcically and absurdly.

The scene is laid at Hunsdon Castle and in its neighbourhood. The Earl of Hunsdon, represented by the actor familiarly known as "Tom Stuart," and long connected with the Haymarket and Adelphi Theatres, is described in the play-bill as "a retired statesman;" but he says of himself that he has been simply jockeyed by his colleagues out of a seat in the Cabinet. His vote in the Lords and his family borough were insufficient to keep him in office, but by wresting from the Opposition the borough of Oldfield and one of the seats for his county, he hopes to double his claims to power, and even possess himself of the blue riband. The sixth, seventh, and eighth Earls of Hunsdon had worn the garter. Why should not the ninth earl do likewise? "Political influence, you know," his lordship observes to his lawyer and agent, Cogit, "is a question of two and two make four." Cogit notes: "Simple addition! I always fancied it a matter of division." With this view Hunsdon Castle has become the scene of great festivity and princely hospitality; oxen are roasted whole, blankets are given to the poor, Lady Hunsdon receives the whole county as her guests, gives brilliant fêtes, including a series of amateur theatrical performances, and even extends her welcome to a vulgar tuft-hunting neighbour, "a retired cit," late of Gracechurch Street, stationer, but now of Hollyhock Lodge, "a staring red-brick house in the middle of a grass-plot, like a lobster garnished with parsley," who, it is proposed, shall be his lordship's candidate for the borough of Oldfield. Lady Hunsdon is described as a dear fanciful creature, who brings down to the country some new craze every season from town: "the last new folly in vogue, guano, the polka, the unknown tongues, teetotalism, capering or vapouring for the million, mesmerism, hydropathy." Captain Sippett, a toady and hanger-on of the Hunsdons, for ever employed in carrying her ladyship's lapdog, and accomplishing like inferior offices, describes her as "turned decidedly blue," and explains that "in fashionable parlance a 'blue' means any literary lady who is not deep 'read.'" Lady Mary Rivers is the only daughter of the Earl and Countess of Hunsdon, and Lord Bellamont, an Eton boy of fourteen, "a diamond edition of the slang dictionary, a monkey miniature of man," dressed in "the extreme of the slang fashion," is their only son. This part was represented by the admired Mrs. Nisbett,

but with incomplete success. The great abilities of the actress could not be displayed to advantage in the character of Lord Bellamont; she was accustomed to appear as the fine ladies and dashing coquettes of comedy, and without doubt her personation of the slangy school-boy considerably increased the farcical tendency of the play. Mr. Farren represented Sir George Mordent, described as "kinsman to the Earl," a critical and philosophical personage whose chief occupation is to comment upon the proceedings of the other characters, and to denounce their speeches as "claptrap," that catchword being made available in almost every scene, and at every possible opportunity.

Mr. Jeremy Grigson, the retired stationer, and his wife, personated by the excellent artists, Mr. Strickland and Mrs. Glover, supply the work with its low-comedy element, but are purely conventional characters. Mr. Grigson has his catchword, and is continually required to observe: "Mrs. G., you're a wag!" He is a vulgar tradesman, who cringes before his social superiors, is much shocked at his wife's want of manners, aspires to the representation in Parliament of the borough of Oldfield, and aims to find a husband for his daughter Ellen among the fine gentlemen at Hunsdon Castle. Mrs. Grigson is distressed by her lord's ambition; "It will bring," as she says, "her grey hairs in sorrow to a wig;" she looks back regretfully upon "the pleasant cheerful rumble of Gracechurch Street;" dislikes Hollyhock Lodge, and declares that "the stillness of the country makes her ears sing;" and that "people must be lord and lady born to put up with such grumpy solitude."

In dramatic interest the comedy is far from strong. Such story as it sets forth is of slight constitution, is rather incoherent, and arrests attention only in a very moderate degree. Henry, a lieutenant in the Navy, and the nephew of Jeremy Grigson, has returned to England after an absence of three years with his ship on the India station. He has returned in the hope of marrying his cousin Ellen and securing her fortune of forty thousand pounds, but learning that his uncle is much opposed to this project, he is persuaded by his aunt, Mrs. Grigson, to assume the name of his messmate, Lord Algernon Fitz-Urse, and for a while to pass himself off as that young nobleman. It is thought that Mr. Grigson will not recognise his nephew, and will welcome the pretended Lord Algernon as a suitor for the hand of Ellen, "snapping him up as a

gudgeon does a worm." Henry assumes very fashionable clothes, Mrs. Grigson declaring him to be "the very moral of that little hop-o'-my-thumb, young Bellamont, magnified in an aromatic microscope;" he is most obsequiously received by his uncle and introduced to Lady Hunsdon, who pronounces him "the perfection of a tiger," and carries him off to Hunsdon Castle to take part in her amateur theatricals. At the Castle, Henry forgets his cousin Ellen and falls in love with Lady Mary. To Ellen this is of small consequence, for she cares nothing for Henry, having bestowed her affections upon a mysterious youth named Rivers, who proves to be the cousin of Sir George Mordent, and another "kinsman to the Earl." Rivers is also carried to the Castle, a notion prevailing that he has been engaged as a singer to appear with the amateurs. The humours of private theatricals are exhibited and some portions of a Spanish comedy of intrigue are presented upon a drawing-room stage, Lord Bellamont appearing in the costume of a court page and making the most of his part. Then there arise certain complications because of the private understanding subsisting between Henry, the pretended Lord Algernon, and his aunt, Mrs. Grigson, which rouses the furious jealousy of Jeremy Grigson. A report is spread that the real Lord Algernon has returned from India without leave after mortally wounding a brother-officer in a duel, and that a warrant has been issued for his apprehension upon a charge of murder; Henry is thus induced to throw off his disguise and unfold himself. The play concludes with the pairing of Henry and Lady Mary, of Rivers and Ellen, and with the political discomfiture of Lord Hunsdon and Jeremy Grigson, for while they have been otherwise occupied, Cogit, the lawyer, has been quietly canvassing, and has secured his own return for the borough of Oldfield. Mrs. Nisbett, still as Lord Bellamont, delivered the epilogue, descriptive of an Eton boy's prospects and aspirations.

To-day, school's up! We've done with stale old Ilion,
Learning is now mere physic for the million;
E'en the fifth form has cut both sage and poet;
We all are out, and all our mothers know it!
London, dear London, with its thousand charms,
Smiles in my face and courts me to its arms!
What if I try the Household's bright brigade?
Dazzle at levées, conquer—on parade—
Astound the park, prate about "one of us,"
And swell the Bravos of the Omnibus?

Victim to starch—to all the sex, a Nero—
My tiger's prey, my valet's slave—and hero !
At Epsom, Ascot, Newmarket, of course,
Eager to stake my kingdom for a horse !
Or, when at Cowes our modern Nelsons anchor,
And furl, with snow-white hands, the jib and spanker,
To brave, amid the gallant R. Y. C.s,
Three tedious weeks, the bottle and the breeze !

Then followed a curious allusion to the author of "Coningsby" as the leader of the Young England Party. Mr. Disraeli was then member for Shrewsbury.

Or what if sobered, cash and courage spent,
I vex the drowsy ear of Parliament ?
My empty head with streaming locks supplied—
Locks—et præterea nihil—Young England's pride !
On sugar-duties show my vote invincible,
And stun them with "the voluntary principle ?"

"Quid pro Quo" was written with some smartness if with inferior taste. The dialogue was of the pert and punning sort, with here and there approaches to wit and humour, and oftentimes a declension into mere vulgarity. The work was not designed to be read; it did not and it does not offer any temptation to readers; on the stage it did not succeed, although Mrs. Gore claimed that her play, condemned and in a great measure unheard at its production, was afterwards repeated with "a result as brilliantly successful as the first ordeal was vexatious." Like "The Rivals," as she urged, "unfortunate in a first representation, it now succeeds in drawing crowded houses and eliciting the hearty laughter so welcome to the ears of the performers." But this seeming prosperity did not endure. No doubt the public were for a while curious on the subject, and the manager did all he could to promote the interest of the comedy and to retain it upon his stage. "Quid pro Quo" was played for some five weeks therefore, but to audiences that gradually diminished and departed, and its final representation was at length announced. So the prize comedy vanished from the stage, to which it has never since been invited to return.

"Walk blindfold on
Behind thee stalks
the headsman!"

Doris Goodall

POPULAR PLAYS.

III.—"RICHELIEU."

It was surely only a natural sequence that Sir Edward Lytton Bulwer, having made his first dramatic success at Covent Garden Theatre, and with Mr. Macready, should desire to follow it up on the same ground, and with the same actor and manager. Thus, early in the second season of Mr. Macready's management, came the pleasing intimation from Sir E. L. Bulwer that he had made the rough sketch of an historical play on the subject of Richelieu, and that it was ready for perusal. No time was lost; Mr. Macready gave the author an early appointment, and the sketch was read.

It would appear that author and actor met frequently to discuss the plot and conduct of the story; that the play was submitted almost act by act; that while Sir Edward Lytton Bulwer in some instances combatted Macready's objections, he invariably ended by giving way to them—in fact he grew delighted with the proposed changes. The idea of the play was suggested at the end of October, and in less than one month, November 21st, the five acts were sent to Mr. Macready in their completed form. From this date it absorbed much of Mr. Macready's time and thought; he was evidently much caught by it, it was read to his family, it was marked for cutting, he read it on his way to the theatre—in fact Richelieu must have haunted him. Although acting nightly such parts as Prospero, Iago, and Werner, rehearsing "William Tell," and attending the rehearsals of pieces in which he did not act, he yet found time to read all books which could help him in the study of the character of Richelieu.

Before reading the play to the actors who were to take part in it, Mr. Macready read it at his own house to some friends and critics. It is related in his diary how he gave pencil and paper to each, asking them to note down their opinion, but not to speak

or in any way interrupt him during the reading. That the play was listened to with the deepest interest one can well imagine.

As an instance of the beauty of Mr. Macready's reading, I may here relate what I have often heard told in the green-room of the Haymarket Theatre. When Mr. Macready was playing his farewell engagement there, and running through the performance of all his popular characters, it was decided to give one or two representations of "Richard II.," a play only seldom acted. When the company heard this, they asked Mr. Macready to read the play to them—a very unusual circumstance; he complied with the request, and on a fixed day the company assembled in the green-room, where they listened with delight, not only to the exquisite poetry of the play, but to the masterly conceptions of the various characters.

"Richelieu" was read to the Covent Garden Company early in the new year, 1839, soon after the launching of the pantomime, when there came a slight cessation of work. Every one was enthusiastic. Sir Edward Lytton Bulwer, who was not present, heard the verdict with delight. Thus the first step was a success, but between this and the production lay much heavy work. With such a company as was then to be found at Covent Garden, there was not much difficulty in getting a strong cast. Herein, however, Mr. Macready departed, and very wisely, from an old custom that had prevailed "time out of mind," namely that of giving the character of the page to an actress. It was time to break through this stupid rule, and Mr. Howe, then a rising young actor, was selected to play François—the same Mr. Howe whom we have known so many years at the Haymarket, and who is now doing good service at the Lyceum. In recent revivals, managers have followed this example, and I must say with advantage to the play. There are young men on the stage, young men who are beginning to climb the ladder, and François is a capital part to fall to their lot.

Mr. Macready took infinite pains over the rehearsals. Although his own character demanded unremitting study, he had a keen eye to all that was passing around him; the acting of others did not escape him; he went over the scenes privately with some of the actors. With Mr. Elton, who played Louis XIII., he did more than this: he sent for him to his room, and read extracts from Cinq Mars, to show him the weak and nervous character of the king. "Richelieu" was produced March 7th, and it was

enthusiastically received by a crowded house, and Mr. Macready, on being loudly called for, announced the play would be repeated every evening.

No doubt the name of Richelieu has a certain fascination about it, hence it is admirably suited to the dramatist. Like our own Wolsey, he is a familiar picture. We may have our preconceived notions of his character; we may think him cold and ambitious, having only the welfare of France at heart when his own interests are concerned, but all this, if it be the opinion of some, is not the judgment of everyone; however, it is no less the material for the dramatist, and he is free to mould it after his own taste and fashion. Sir Edward Lytton Bulwer gives us a Richelieu who is warm-hearted, unselfish, with the love of country "paramount o'er all." By turns the old man is grand, nay terrible, then full of sly humour, with a keen appreciation of a joke. If the real Richelieu differs from the stage Richelieu, the author has only taken a poet's license. Doctors differ, so do historians. Mr. Wills has not followed history with slavish obedience, but in departing from it, when he makes a good play, we do not quarrel with him. So then with Richelieu; he may or may not have been the man we see set before us; no matter, we have a character that is strongly dramatic, full of great opportunities for the actor, especially so if he be a comedian as well as a tragedian. There are also the ever shifting changes from feebleness of age to indomitable will and power; the pride and pomp of state; the downfall and the restoration. What a world of wealth is all this to lie within the actor's grasp!

There are certain stage effects which cannot fail, but they grow out of the situation, they are not dragged into position. I have often wondered how far the actor's knowledge of these effects helped the author. There can be no doubt that Sir Edward Lytton Bulwer worked con amore with Mr. Macready, and that the play was submitted to the actor, as it grew. Such collaboration is in the best interest of the stage, and should be more frequently in use. Witness the coup de théâtre in the sudden appearance of Richelieu, after his reported death, to the great discomfiture of his enemies; again when he is brought into the presence of the King in the last act. He is then supposed to be dying, he resigns his ministry, and yet keenly watches the embarrassment of the King and the new minister; then, when as it were crushed and fallen, comes the renewal of his power and

vigour. New life is given to him as he grasps the conspirators' despatch, the possession of which foils his enemies and reinstates him in the Royal favour. The launching of "the curse of Rome" is, of course, one of the test scenes of the character. Let the actor only rise to the occasion, and the effect is grand. The audience—that is to say, many of them—know this scene is in store for them; they sit hushed with bated breath until the last words are spoken. The speech might almost have been an anti-climax, had not the dramatist, with consummate skill, reserved some powerful lines to bring down the act-drop.

The love story of De Mauprat and Julie de Mortemar is not strong. It is essential to the main interest of the play, but it does not absorb much interest, or create much sympathy. These two characters are, as it were, the pawns upon the chess-board, but Richelieu is the player. They are moved hither and thither for defence or for attack, but the mainspring of their own action is altogether wanting. Of course Mr. James Anderson and Miss Helen Faucit, then the best representatives of all that was chivalric and idyllic, gave immense strength to the cast. The King is a small part, but in competent hands much may be made of it; such was the case when Mr. John Clayton played it at the Lyceum; the character is often slurred over, and thus it becomes a nonentity. Baradas belongs to the unthankful range of parts; he is a villain, but not a consummate one—in fact, there is this anomaly about him, if he were much worse he would be much better. François is the very antithesis of Baradas; it is only a pleasure to act the part. Joseph and Huguet, if small parts, are still important. Marion de Lorme has little else to do than look handsome.

Richelieu is a favourite character with all tragedians. We have seen in the earlier portion of this paper how much Mr. Macready admired the play; he had evidently an enjoyment, a positive pleasure in acting it. Mr. Phelps frequently acted Richelieu; he was admirably suited to the character, because he was a good comedian as well as a tragedian. There is an excellent likeness of him in this part at the Garrick Club; it is painted by Mr. Forbes Robertson, and was purchased by a subscription of some members of the club. It seems somewhat strange that Richelieu should not have been numbered amongst the characters of Mr. Charles Kean—surely it would have suited him; but I cannot find it on record that he ever acted it. He certainly did not in London. Cardinal Wolsey

was a favourite character with him; Cardinal Richelieu might have proved a good companion-picture. Mr. Henry Irving has revived the play at the Lyceum. Mr. Barry Sullivan stars with it. Mr. Edwin Booth is now acting it at the Adelphi Theatre. Many of his admirers incline to place this personation foremost in his répertoire. Criticism has very recently thoroughly discussed the merits of this performance.

There are many passages of great poetic beauty in the play, less of what is termed "clap-trap" than in "The Lady of Lyons." The lines ending the first act:

> France! I love thee!
> All Earth shall never pluck thee from my heart!
> My mistress France—my wedded wife—sweet France,
> Who shall proclaim divorce for thee and me?

have a charming flowing melody in them. While we listen to them we watch the speaker; the enthusiasm of the old Cardinal rises with each couplet until the climax is arrived at with the last words: this is as it should be.

There is ample opportunity in the play for scenic illustration. The Garden of the Louvre; the Palais Cardinal, its walls hung with tapestry and arras; and Richelieu's Castle at Ruelle, are all to be made much of; yet somehow the play acts well without all the elaborate "appliances and means to boot" to which we have become accustomed; consequently it must be a good acting play, and hence a popular play.

Walter Gordon.

Poem for Recitation.

COMING HOME.

By Alfred Berlyn.

AROUND the cottage sweeps the northern blast,
Icy and shrill; the giant leafless elms
That tower above the village moan and bow
Trembling before the fierce relentless gale:
And the thick snowflakes at their silent work
Are swiftly hiding with a spotless robe
The brown thatch'd cottage roof. Beneath that roof,
Sad and alone this bitter Christmas-eve,

An old man sits. His head droops on his breast,
And with a steadfast eye, that seems to read
Past memories or future mysteries
In the red glow, he gazes in the fire.
As a quick dancing gleam now and again
Starts up and plays around his silvery hair,
The furrowed brow, the wan and wasted cheek,
The dull sad eye, the bent enfeebled form,
Proclaim with mute and pitying eloquence
The gnawing anguish of a breaking heart.
And still he sits, and still he gazes on,
As though the fire held all he loved on earth.
All that he loves? he has no one to love:
His thoughts are in the past, and as he looks
He sees betwixt the bars a Christmas-eve
Ten dreary years ago—it seems to him
Ten centuries—when he, poor broken wretch!
Was light of heart as any man on earth;
The happy husband of a loving wife,
The doting father of a darling child.
And eighteen years of peace and joy had passed,
His fairy child the sunshine of his home;
Eighteen bright years of roseate happiness,
Without one cloud to dim his sunny life.
Then the dark shadow of the coming doom
Fell o'er his house—and yet he knew it not.
Honest and trusting, open as the day,
Holding man's honour dearer than his life,
Could he read "Villain" in the smiling face
Of that glib youth who won his daughter's love
And when the mother's heart was stirred with doubt
And vague foreboding of some coming ill,
He answered, laughing: "Never fear, good wife;
Marry above her station? what of that?
Our Mary's sweet enough to wed an earl;
Trust me, the young squire's lucky winning her!"
And so his foolish dream went on and on,
Until that awful morn when he awoke
To learn the tidings of her shameful flight,
And gaze upon the wreck of love and home.
Blow followed blow; his poor heart-broken wife,
Crushed by her erring daughter's load of shame,

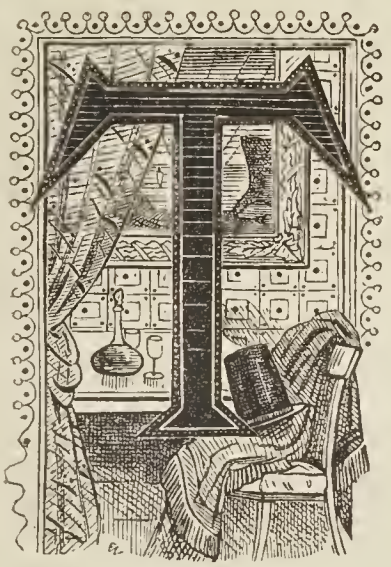
Sickened and drooped ; and, all within the month,
Died with her lost child's name upon her lips.
And he was left alone : and as he crept
Back from her grave to what was once his home
His heart was hardened ; with a fearful oath
He cursed alike betrayer and betrayed,
And raising up his hand toward the sky,
"May God abandon me in death," he cried,
"If ever I look on her face again ;
Though she were starving at my very door
May God's curse seize me if I succour her ! "
Ten years ago, ten dreary years ago.
Louder and fiercer blows the chilling blast,
Moaning and sighing through the leafless trees ;
Closer the old man cowers o'er the fire,
Spreading his hands towards the dancing flame.
"A fearful night ! " he mutters ; then he thinks
Of his grim oath, and wonders—Is she dead ?
"May God abandon me "—Hark ! what was that ?
Nothing—the wind was howling round the door
And moved the latch a little. But that cry ?
Like a stone statue sat the old man there,
His heart like ice, his face the hue of death.
Again that cry. Hush ! 'twas a human voice
That mingled with the howling of the wind.
"Father ! " A mighty trembling seized the man,
But still he answered not. Faint came the cry,
"Father, have pity on me ; let me in ! "
And still the old man trembled more and more,
But still he answered not. Loud shrieked the blast,
Like some lost spirit in eternal woe ;
And as its wail rang louder round the house
Once more that cry came faintly from the door :
"Father, I'm dying ! I, your only child !
Forgive me ! pity me ! Oh, take me home ! "
And then a fierce convulsion shook the man ;
With a half sob he staggered to his feet
And turned towards the door ; but even then
He started back, and throwing up his hands,
"My oath, my oath ! " he cried ; and, sinking down,
He stopped his ears, and crushed his bleeding heart,
And sat and gazed and gazed into the fire.

The night wore on, the embers sank and died;
The wind howled ever fiercely round the house,
But all beside was still; the cry had ceased.
In the dark chamber motionless he sat,
Shutting his ears against the moaning blast;
Alone? no, not alone; for as he sat
A spirit seemed to pass before his eyes,
And through the gloom he saw his wife's dead face,
Sad and reproachful, gazing into his;
And as she passed, a deep and mournful voice
Stole through the fast-closed portals of his ears:
"Too late for mercy now, our child is dead!"
And then the mighty torrent of remorse,
Bursting the floodgates of his anguished soul,
Washed out the crimson record of his oath;
And with a cry that froze upon his lips
He started to his feet and gained the door.
An awful terror whispered at his heart,
And the dread words rang loud within his ears,
"Too late, too late! our child is dead—dead—dead!"
He tore the iron fastenings from the door
And flung it wide: and as the shrieking wind
Rushed in triumphant with its snowy freight,
Across the threshold fell—a frozen corpse.
He spoke no word, he never uttered cry,
But, clasping his dead child against his breast,
He sank and fell beside the open door,
And his worn soul went forth to meet his child,
And kindly death joined hand in hand for aye,
The storm their requiem, and their shroud the snow.
And when the morning rose, and Christmas bells
Proclaimed glad tidings of great joy to men,
They knelt for mercy at that opening door
Where the great Father of forgiving love
Welcomes His erring children's coming home.

BENJAMIN WEBSTER.

A Memoir.

By J. Palgrave Simpson.



THE name of Benjamin Webster will carry back the memory of old play-goers to a very remote period; and his death, which took place on Saturday, the 8th of July last, when, ripe with years, and ripe too with honours, he bowed his head at last under the burden of long life, at the age of eighty-five, severed a link between the far past and the present of the British stage. This link, however, was not one which connected any old school of acting with the school of more modern times; for Benjamin Webster was of no school but that of nature. His style of acting had no connection with that of the much-vaunted old "palmy days;" it had no distinctive quality which separated it materially from the present newer style of histrionic art. His mannerisms—and he was not without certain peculiarities of diction—were due to his inborn nature, and not to the teachings of any school whatever. In all his various performances, ranging from eccentric comic character to the deepest pathos—and never did a more versatile actor tread the boards of the English stage—nature alone appeared to be his guide and teacher. In him we have lost a great actor. For some years past, it is true, he has disappeared from public ken. Until a very advanced age he still held on. But time mastered him at last; and the younger generation of play-goers have never known him except by name—a name which all lovers of the drama cannot fail to honour.

Benjamin Webster was born at Bath on September 3rd, 1798. We are told that he was originally intended for the Army, of which his father, Captain Webster, was a distinguished member, and was even promised a commission by the Duke of York. Be that as it

may, he broke away from parental wishes and control, even in his school-days, and "ran away"—how many of our greatest actors have not done the same?—to follow his bent, and seek his fortunes on the stage.

Those fortunes were miserable enough at first; and Benjamin Webster, in later years, when standing at the head of his profession as actor, manager, and dramatic author, would narrate to his friends, with genial humour, his shifts and trials, and even sufferings, when tramping, often hungry and footsore, from one country theatre to another. His salary was of the lowest—his work arduous. But he held on, learning his art by practice and experience. His ambition to be an actor was proof against all struggles and ever-recurring difficulties. One advantage, however, he possessed which helped him greatly on his way, as slowly and painfully he climbed step by step the rungs of the histrionic ladder. He had already a great proficiency in fencing, dancing, and music, from early education. His violin-playing, which he exercised, in later years, in several of his parts, enabled him to earn an increase of salary as a member of the orchestra in the poor theatres, where such a talent could be appreciated and employed. And thus he mounted upwards, although by slow and painful steps.

The youth seems to have obtained engagements at the Cheltenham, Croydon, and Richmond theatres, playing parts of (what is technically called) "general utility," and thus receiving that schooling which such a course of theatrical training best supplies to the aspirant who is resolved to master every detail of his profession. During this portion of his career, young Webster was engaged for a short time at the Coburg Theatre in London, since better known as the Victoria—the "Vic" of a melodrama-loving public—and he there appeared in a drama called "Trial by Battle," founded on a noted cause célèbre, in which the brother of a murdered girl had challenged her supposed murderer to a trial of innocence or guilt by the force of arms—a process still at that time legally permitted by an almost obsolete but unrepealed statute. He appears also to have subsequently found his place again in London at the Regency Theatre, since called the Queen's, and now the Prince of Wales's.

A chance, however, came to determine the rise of Benjamin Webster in his career. His biographers tell us that he was engaged in a subordinate position at Drury Lane Theatre, when

the sudden illness of Harley, who was playing Pompey in "Measure for Measure," induced the management to offer the character to young Webster, at that time almost unknown. But from Mr. Webster himself the present writer has heard a different version of this fortunate chance.

Disappointed with the results of his long apprenticeship, he narrated, and almost despairing of ultimate success, with a heart sick from "hope deferred," he had quitted the career of his boyish ambition, and had established himself in a small bookseller's shop in Holywell Street, when one morning an excited messenger hurried in to tell him that in the emergency of Harley's illness the management had remembered him. Would he—could he—take the part of Pompey at a few hours' notice? The young actor was frightened and nervous. It was a "neck or nothing" venture. He screwed his courage to the striking place, played Pompey that night, to the great satisfaction of the management, and to his own future advantage. From that moment his career was marked by a steady upward rise. Parts of greater and greater responsibility were entrusted to him; and his name became known among theatrical circles.

He was soon to be found as a member of the Haymarket company, working at his profession with unflagging ardour and industry, accepting parts of the most varied description, and bestowing an individuality on all. His progress was now rapid towards that artistic excellence which he was eventually destined to achieve. The "little theatre in the Haymarket" was at that time opened only in the summer months; and in the winter seasons Benjamin Webster appeared at Covent Garden, then under the lesseeship of Mr. Osbaldiston, and occupied there the responsible post of stage-manager. But the greatest step in his career was still to come. In the year 1837 he was fortunate enough to find himself in a sufficiently strong position to be able courageously to assume the reins of management of the Haymarket Theatre.

His first bold innovation as manager was to establish his theatre on the same footing as other London theatres. It was kept open for the entire year, and the name of "summer theatre" existed no longer.

This management may be regarded as the culminating point of Benjamin Webster's theatrical career. It was associated with some mighty strides in dramatic progress, both in acting and

literature. Under Mr. Webster's auspices, plays were produced by the late Lord Lytton, Sheridan Knowles, Serjeant Talfourd, Douglas Jerrold, Lovel, Westland Marston, Planché, and other authors of note; and among his principal friends and supporters the new manager reckoned the names of Dickens, Thackeray, Forster, Edwin Landseer, and most of the celebrities of a brilliant period. The enumeration of the various plays of note which now delighted the play-going public at the Haymarket Theatre would lead too far; but among them may be reckoned such sterling and enduring plays as Sheridan Knowles's comedy of "The Love Chase," rendered memorable by the acting of Strickland, Mrs. Glover, Mrs. Nisbett, and Webster himself as Wildrake, and Lord Lytton's brilliant comedy of "Money."

Two experiments were likewise made by the manager. The one of which was only a partial success, the other a failure, although both were undertaken in a laudable spirit. The first here alluded to was a revival of Shakespeare's "Taming of the Shrew," as it might have been acted at Shakespeare's own time, without scenic decoration, and with only placards hung up to indicate the nature of the supposed scene; Mrs. Nisbett and Webster being the Katherine and Petruchio. The second was the offer of five hundred pounds (a large sum for a dramatic work at that time) for a prize play, the merits of which were to be decided by a conclave of competent judges. The choice fell on "Quid pro Quo," a comedy by Mrs. Gore, which entirely failed to please the public. Its history is related by Mr. Dutton Cook on another page of this magazine.

The dramatic artists engaged by Webster deserve, at the same time, brilliant mention. Besides those already mentioned as illustrating the comedy of "The Love Chase," are to be found the names of Macready, Charles Kean, William Farren the elder, Elton, Buckstone, Charles Mathews, Wrench, David Rees, Madame Vestris, Mrs. Charles Kean, Miss Helen Faucit, Mrs. Stirling, and many others of distinguished talent and note. It cannot be denied that the Haymarket era under Webster's auspices was a brilliant one. In his valedictory address, on leaving the theatre, he announced to the public that during his lesseeship of the theatre he had paid thirty thousand pounds to authors, sixty thousand pounds for rent, and had introduced lighting by gas into the establishment.

In 1844, Benjamin Webster resigned the Haymarket management into the hands of Mr. Buckstone, and confined himself entirely to that of the Adelphi Theatre, with which he had been for some time connected, under the immediate superintendence of Madame Celeste. In the temple of melodrama and farce which Webster rebuilt and re-decorated, and which now appeared as the *new* Adelphi Theatre, a very fine company was again collected by the manager. Besides himself and Madame Celeste—one of the best of melodramatic pantomimists—we find the names of Mr. and Mrs. Keeley, Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Wigan, Leigh Murray, Miss Woolgar (afterwards Mrs. Alfred Mellon), Wright, Toole, and Paul Bedford.

The Adelphi management was made memorable by such pieces as "The Willow Copse," "Janet Pride," "Belphegor," and "The Dead Heart," in all of which the talent of the manager shone with increased lustre. The new Adelphi was also the cradle of Boucicault's "Colleen Bawn"—a mine of wealth in itself; and it witnessed the first appearance here of the inimitable Jefferson in "Rip van Winkle." Besides the parts to which allusion has been already made, Benjamin Webster displayed the most consummate art in the characters of Lavator, Tartuffe in Oxenford's version of Molière's play, Triplet in "Masks and Faces," Giles Fairfield in "Who's Your Friend," and Stanislaus de Fonblanche in "The Roused Lion." It may be said that in all the impersonations he undertook he proved himself to be a careful, zealous, and successful student of the art to which he had devoted his life, and that in all he displayed an originality as well as earnestness of conception. The variety of characters in which, little by little, he worked his way to renown and prosperity was almost marvellous, particularly when it is remembered that much of his time and talent was bestowed on his numerous dramatic works. He was a most prolific writer. Most of his works, to be sure, were adaptations from the French; but many of these, such as "One Touch of Nature," and "The Laughing Hyena," still hold the stage.

Among his numerous avocations he was also a great supporter, and an active official, of the most prominent theatrical funds. He founded also, with much pains and labour, the Dramatic College for the support of old actors and actresses. But this institution was destined to failure and an ignominious end.

The time came at last for his retirement when already far

advanced in years, and a highly productive benefit at Drury Lane, in 1874, closed his histrionic career.

In his youth Benjamin Webster must have been a very handsome man. Even in middle age his personal appearance was remarkable. His vigour and vivacity, almost to the end of his days, were very striking; and an unflagging spirit of vitality was a peculiar gift of his nature. As regards this latter exceptional quality, an anecdote may be considered worth recording.

It is not generally known that some few years ago the subject of this memoir was "laid out" for dead. His doctor and two of his intimate theatrical associates were with him at (what they considered) his "last moments." "It is all over now," said the doctor, as he covered the "corpse" with a sheet. What followed had better be told in Mr. Webster's own words to the writer.

"Well, sir! I felt a queer suffocating sensation; something was over my face. I snatched away the sheet—for such it was. I was alone. But there was a light in the room. So I got out of bed, put on my dressing-gown and slippers, and went down into the parlour. There, sir, sat my friends, drinking whisky and water—my whisky, sir—and saying, 'Well, poor old Ben's gone at last!' 'Am I?' said I. You may guess what a turn the fellows had. But I was not going to let off the doctor, you know. We guessed he hadn't gone far. I dressed quickly; and, true enough, we found him at a neighbouring pot-house, sitting with his back to the door, and eating tripe and onions, sir, with a gin-bottle by his side, quite comfortable. 'A pretty fellow you are to send me out of the world before my time!' I shouted. You should have seen him. He started up as if he were shot. We all thought he was going off in a fit then and there, instead of me. He took me for a ghost! I don't think he'll send people into their graves in a hurry again!"

Death was not victorious then. His day was only to come in the future. But Death has triumphed over his stout antagonist at last.

Our Musical-Box.

ON the 28th of June, the closing performance of the first German Opera season took place at Drury Lane. "Meistersinger" was the work selected by Hans Richter wherewith to bid his London friends and admirers "Auf Wiedersehen" until next October, and an absolutely unexceptionable rendering of Wagner's masterpiece afforded the audience an excellent pretext for giving unbridled expression, by enthusiastic plaudits and repeated "calls," to the gratitude felt by the musical inhabitants of this metropolis towards their gifted, earnest, and indefatigable German visitors. As for Richter, poor fellow, if he worked his artists, vocal and instrumental, well-nigh to death—an accusation to which he certainly laid himself open whilst "Tristan" was in course of preparation—he never for an instant spared himself. One night during the terrible fortnight immediately preceding the production of that "music-drama," he refused a pressing invitation to spend Sunday—which should have been an off-day for him and his acolytes—with an intimate friend, in the following characteristic terms: "Forgive me, brother. It is not thine old Hans who refuses. Until 'Tristan' shall have been played I shall not be once again a human being!" At what a sacrifice of time, and an expenditure of labour, he, and those associated with him in the Drury Lane enterprise, fulfilled their engagements to the British public may be gathered from the following astonishing fact, which he himself imparted to me on the eve of his departure for Vienna. The German Opera Company's total sojourn in London extended over sixty-four days all told, and during that time it underwent no fewer than ninety-two rehearsals (besides forty odd performances) under his personal direction. This phenomenal assiduity on the part of leader and executants alike, accounts, to a great extent, for the admirable results achieved; but I venture to believe that few members of the several audiences wrought to an unusually high pitch of enthusiasm by the unprecedented all-round excellence of the performances in question, had the least apprehension of the

means by which that excellence was attained. Small wonder that, towards the end of June, Richter found his clothes fitting him with unfamiliar looseness, or that the leading soloists were a prey to chronic hoarseness and exhaustion, or that the orchestra, as a whole, had acquired a "lean and hungry look," when one reflects upon the performances and rehearsals, at the respective rates of five and ten per week, which all these worthy souls had been through during two summer months of the London fashionable season. I wish I could say with truth that the pecuniary outcome of such splendidly successful exertions had been even approximately worthy of them!

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More than one-third of the total number of rehearsals were devoted to "Meistersinger," and "Tristan and Isolde," which, as a matter of fact, repaid the pains bestowed upon them by turning out the only commercial successes of the series. Oddly enough, neither "Tannhaüser" nor "Lohengrin" drew, although both these operas may fairly claim to be general favourites in London. "Flying Dutchman" was a loss, and so was "Euryanthe," which totally failed to lay hold of the public, despite its great melodic attractions and admirable interpretation; "Fidelio" paid its expenses, but no more; whereas "Meistersinger" and "Tristan" filled Drury Lane to the ceiling every time they were given, and were even the cause of actual money being turned away from the doors. "Tristan" was the chief effort of the Franke-Pollini enterprise; every imaginable resource of which in money, brains, labour, energy, and taste was lavished upon the production of this gigantic, incoherent, and terribly ponderous work. Let me at once admit that, being what I take it for—a musical monstrosity, bristling with unpardonable offences and insuperable difficulties—it was performed with a completeness that, as Richter himself confessed, had never heretofore been equalled in Germany, and will probably hereafter never be excelled anywhere. All that was possible in the way of mounting, judicious allotment of parts, inimitable stage-managing, accompanying, and leading, to make "Tristan" tolerable, was done. If this great endeavour failed to produce the desired result—as I think it did—no one but Wagner himself was to blame for the fiasco. A loathsome story, set to music that is frequently ugly, still oftener incomprehensible, and always tiresome, may

find favour with a few overwrought worshippers of its author, but can never achieve great and genuine popularity. To those endowed by nature with healthy musical instinct—with the gifts which are commonly spoken of as an "ear" and a "taste" for music—such works as "Tristan" must appear (at least, so it seems to me) in the light of rank offences. Nothing in or of art has a right to be hideous in any of its parts. Whenever it is so, it is guilty of a crime that the public should never pardon, or even condone. "Tristan," as a musical composition, is steeped in this particular sort of turpitude. As a poem, it is at once inflated and obscure in style, and revoltingly immoral in intention. Wagner has exhibited an ingenuity little short of fiendish in making his leading characters — those who give the opera its title— so vulgarly sensual and repulsively dishonourable, that no pure soul or commonly honest nature can possibly sympathise with either of them.

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By this time, I doubt not, all the readers of The Theatre are more or less familiar with the plot of "Tristan," which has been minutely explained and circumstantially narrated by many able writers in the daily and weekly press, who, however, have for the most part touched upon its abominations and absurdities with too light a hand. The libretto teems with suggestions of almost inconceivable vileness. What, for instance, can be more noisome than the thought underlying the Queen of Ireland's gift to her daughter upon the occasion of the latter's trip to Cornwall? Isolde is destined, as her wicked old witch of a mother well knows, to espouse a King advanced in years. Therefore the royal sorceress, with sinister forethought, endows her with a combination of cellaret and medicine-chest containing four very rare and curious liquors. Two of them were intended for general use, pro re natâ, as the prescriptions say; the other two could have been meant for no other person than the unfortunate old gentleman upon whom Isolde was about to bestow her hand. The Queen knew nothing of Tristan or of her daughter's secret and unconfessed regard for that handsome homicide, the slayer of an Irish nobleman previously betrothed to Isolde. Her purpose in providing the Princess with a love-philter and a death-potion will scarcely bear description. Isolde is acquainted with the peculiar properties of the drugs

supplied to her for household use—a fact which goes far to establish her complicity with her mother in respect to their destination. It is difficult to feel anything but disgust and contempt for a heroine lying under such a horrible imputation. That, in a fit of bad temper and ruffled vanity, she suddenly resolves to poison herself and the man who killed her sweetheart, instead of the feeble old cackler awaiting her on the Cornish shore, only proves that, in way of turpitude, all is fish that comes to her net. One could understand that she should kill herself in preference to carrying out her mother's instructions; but there is really no excuse, good or bad, for her taking Tristan's life. When she directs Brangaene to pour out the draught of reconciliation, to be shared between Tristan and herself, she means murder. Brangaene, however, to whom the secrets of the travelling cellaret—apparently Isolde's only article of luggage—have been disclosed, fills up the "loving cup" with the contents of the wrong bottle, a liquid the effect of which upon its consumers is such that it can scarcely be alluded to in commonly decent language. Wagner, however, makes a point of describing the effect in question, verbally and musically, to the best of his marvellous ability.

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One more specimen of the "Tristan" libretto, and I have done with a work which I regard as a direct negation of musical art and an outrage upon public decorum. When Isolde finds herself upon the point of death in consequence of her nephew's idiotic suicide, she expresses herself to the bystanders in the following remarkable language, translated faithfully from the original German: "Clearer resounding, me surrounding, are they waves of soft airs? are they billows of delicious perfumes? As they swell and swirl round me, shall I breathe, shall I lurk? Shall I sip, dive down, exhale myself sweetly in scents? Shall I in the surging billow of the rapture-ocean, in the resonant echo of the odour-waves, in the blowing-entirety of the world-breath, drown, sink unconscious? Highest bliss!" Some of Richard Wagner's utterest admirers esteem these lines to be quite too thrillingly poetical. They do not quite come up to my standard of what an operatic libretto ought to be, maybe because I have not the least notion of what they mean, if anything. Pitman himself is more intelligible. When Tristan and his aunt yell out in

unison such fulsome rubbish as "Love-holiest life rapture-sublimest weaving, delusionless lovely conscious wish for never-again-waking!" I think with a regretful sigh of

> When hollow hearts shall wear a mask
> 'Twill break your own to see,

and acknowledge that Alfred Bunn has been at length beaten upon his own enigmatical ground by the Bayreuth Bard.

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From "Tristan" to "Velléda" is a wide jump—some estimable musician would say, backwards—others, for whose judgment I entertain profound respect, would say, forwards. To me the première of Lenepveu's grand opera was an agreeable surprise, although I had been privileged to hear a good deal of the music "recited" on the pianoforte by the composer, and "something more than hummed and less than sung" by the gifted creator of the title-rôle. I found it throughout a melodious, genial, and thoroughly well-constructed work, replete with pleasant tunes and scholarly part-writing. From beginning to end there is not an offensive bar in it, whilst three or four of the musical episodes comprised in its somewhat unwieldy dimensions fully deserve the epithet "charming." "Velléda," as presented on its first night at Covent Garden, was unquestionably too long. Although it had been well rehearsed, and was played as "close" as was humanly compatible with the necessary changes of scene at the termination of each act, it did not end till nearly half-past twelve, so that one of its best numbers, a duet between Madame Patti and Signor Nicolini, was sung to a half-empty house. This untoward circumstance, the unfavourable effect of which upon the public temper was manifest in several press notices of the work, was due to Lenepveu's not unnatural reluctance to authorise certain "cuts" urgently recommended to him by one of his best friends, whose advice, however, he subsequently adopted, thereby shortening the second performance by more than half an hour. The opera, however, was not only cried down by the leading London critics, but sustained mortal injury at the hands of the Covent Garden impresario; why, I am at a loss to conjecture, considering that Mr. Gye had expended large sums of money in mounting "Velléda" with a splendour and completeness long unfamiliar

to the Royal Italian Opera House. When a manager puts a novelty on the stage, quite unexceptionably, has it played to two crowded houses, announces its third performance, and then—withdraws it for no acknowledged reason, one is involuntarily reminded of Bismarck's memorable remark to the late Duke of Augustenburg, when the latter respectfully declined to part with his birthright: "Those who hatch a chicken can also wring its neck."

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The story of "Velléda" bears a strong family resemblance to that of "Norma." Both these ladies are priestesses, pledged to perpetual chastity by awful vows, infringement of which is punishable by death. Both are irretrievably enamoured of gay and unscrupulous young Roman prætors, and come to signal grief in consequence of "stooping to folly" in that particular direction. In the sole respect of being unencumbered by a small but obtrusive family, Velléda has the advantage of her prototype; for she derives no benefit from the fact that her lover is a good fellow enough in his way, instead of being a contemptible cur, like Pollio. The love-intricacies of the tale, set to music by Lenepveu, are a good deal more complicated than those immortalised in sound by Bellini. Velléda's Roman officer is the object of two, if not of three, young ladies' affections, and she herself is madly adored by a noble Gaul, one of her own countrymen, as well as by the gallant prætor. One of the enamoured damsels, by the way, is disguised in tights and a dummy harp, so as to pass for a minstrel youth; and although she sedulously displays her exuberant charms, which would do honour to the mother of six, to her beloved general at every available opportunity throughout Acts I. and II., he never so much as suspects her real sex until the latter part of Act III., when she frantically avows what has been obvious for hours to every person in the house except himself. I may here remark, par parenthèse, that the uncommonly buxom lady who impersonated Even—presumably a Welsh bard—was, as far as her singing was concerned, an odd example of every known vice of style and production save one, false intonation. That she screamed and quavered strictly in tune I would be the last person to deny. It was her only merit, and, as such, commands acknowledgment.

But it will never atone for her sins of commission and omission the name of which is legion.

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The title-rôle of Velléda is not much of a part for Adelina Patti; but she sang and acted it so magnificently on the 4th of July that no one present on that occasion is likely to forget her rendering of the loving and heroic but ill-fated Druidical priestess. Declamatory rather than lyrical, the music written for Velléda is alike expressive and impressive—an absolutely "new departure" for the greatest vocalist living, the florid songstress, par excellence, of the day. There is not a roulade or a staccato passage in the whole part, which, with respect to its freedom from ornamentation, might have been composed by Richard Wagner himself. It is, however, uniformly melodious and appropriate to the situations of body and mind described in the libretto. I can conscientiously say the same of all the leading parts in Lenepveu's opera. Celio (Nicolini) is a very desirable rôle for a robust tenor, comprising as it does more "bits of fat" than that of Velléda herself. Ina (Madame Valleria) seems to have nothing whatsoever to do with the plot, but a great deal that is delightful to sing. The patriot Gaul, Teuter (Cotogni), has a fine song in the second act and an important share in several excellent concerted pieces; nor is the venerable Druid, Senon (De Reszke), denied opportunities of distinguishing himself as a basso of the deepest dye. Lenepveu uses his soloists generously, and is prodigal of "good things" to his orchestra. As his melodies are not always strikingly original, and as there is nothing perplexingly "occult" about his instrumentation, London critics—the same who so recently denounced the Nibelung composer for audacity and obscurity alike—have freely and almost unanimously stigmatised him as a mere copyist and pedant. I differ from them; and so, to my apprehension, did the numerous and sympathetic audience thronging every part of Covent Garden Theatre on the night of Velléda's first performance. It is all very well to say that, upon that occasion, the opera obtained nothing more than a succès d'estime, and a modest one at that. As far as a thirty years' experience of premières may have enabled me to judge, its reception by the public lacked no symptom of a real and solid success. Storms of applause greeted the conclusion of each act, several numbers were vigorously re-demanded, the leading performers were

"called" over and over again, and Lenepveu himself was twice imperatively summoned before the curtain, where he appeared hand-in-hand with the gifted and beautiful woman to whose staunch friendship and indomitable resolution he owes the production of his chief work upon the London stage. I am convinced that the audience liked "Velléda," and, but for its excessive length, would have listened to it with genuine pleasure to the very end.

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I cannot refrain from recording in this place my conviction that Adelina Patti, as singer and actress, has this season surpassed all her previous achievements, and that her glorious voice is more perfectly beautiful now than it has ever hitherto been. It has over and over again been hinted in the columns of the daily and weekly press, since her return from America, that "her great physical powers show signs of decay," that "the quality of her upper register has suffered deterioration," and even that "her intonation, once so absolutely infallible, is no longer irreproachable." I am sorry to disagree with censors whose position may be held to vouch for their soundness of judgment, and I know how ill-advised it always appears to contradict one's seniors, men of recognised authority and acknowledged influence; but I must do so on this issue, or confess myself unworthy of the trust reposed in me by the editor of The Theatre. Madame Patti is more truly the empress of song at the present moment than she was ten years ago. Her voice is at the zenith of its might, sweetness, and flexibility. Its quality is unique, and her production of it incomparable. As for her intonation, I believe her incapable of singing a shade out of tune. Her permanent vocal station is the exact middle of the note. People who fancy they hear her straying from that central post make a great mistake. It is not her voice that is out of tune, but their ears.

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During the past season I have repeatedly encountered Signor Raimo's "Drawing-room Orchestra" in society, always to my great delectation. It is a useful and meritorious institution, for which wealthy party-givers, who aim at combining a maximum of hospitality with a minimum of inconvenience to themselves, should be sincerely grateful to its originator. To such people, who abound in this huge busy-beehive of ours, Alberto Raimo

cannot but appear in the light of a benefactor. All they have to do is to send him a polite note mentioning the date of the party for which they desire to secure his services, and enclosing "a little cheque." He will provide them with a musical entertainment, instrumental and vocal, of excellent quality, and take every description of trouble respecting it off their hands. His arrangements of overtures, operatic selections, dance music, etc., for a miniature band, including pianoforte and harmonium, are really admirable, as is his conducting. The idea which he has thus intelligently put into execution was altogether his own. Artist-like, he omitted to secure it from infringement by legal precautions. It has, therefore, been coolly appropriated by others, and under circumstances of peculiar aggravation to the author of its being. If only on the principle that every inventor should have the full benefit of his ingenuity, society should stick to Alberto Raimo and his drawing-room band, and steadfastly snub his plagiarists and their Bijou Orchestras.

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Should it be true, as I have been assured, that Hans Richter, and the instrumentalists lately under his command at Drury Lane, are heavy losers by the collapse of the Franke-Pollini enterprise, I trust that the just and generous British public will insist upon seeing the greatest conductor alive and his splendidly efficient fellow-artists safely through their pecuniary embarrassments; so far at least as the latter may be directly attributable to their engagements in connection with German Opera. It would be too cruel were these fine players to lose the hard-earned remuneration of their two-months' indefatigable labour at the Lane and the Hall—over ninety rehearsals and nearly forty performances! Nor can it be tolerated that Hans Richter, as it is heavily handicapped in the race of life by a wife and six young children, should find his income for the present year curtailed by several hundred pounds, for which he has given English music-lovers far more than "value received." Whoever may suffer by Herr Franke's bankruptcy, the genial, single-hearted Viennese Kapellmeister must be protected against actual loss by those who stand indebted to him for many a priceless hour of pure enjoyment.

Wm. Beatty Kingston.

OUR PORTRAITS.

MISS MEASOR IN "ODETTE."
MR. EDWIN BOOTH AS RICHELIEU.

MISS MEASOR, who forms our photographic frontispiece this month, first entered the theatrical profession in November, 1879, and travelled in the provinces with Mrs. Chippendale for three successive tours, playing many parts and gaining much experience. She made her first appearance in London at the Court Theatre on September 24th last year, when she acted Leonie de Latour in "Honour." In the revival of "Engaged," at the same theatre, on November 30th, she made her first success by her charming portrayal of the Scotch lassie, Maggie; and on February 15th she played Gladys in "My Little Girl," and Mrs. Codham, the old and eccentric charwoman, in "The Manager," both plays being also produced at the Court Theatre. Miss Measor was then specially engaged by Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft for the part of Margaret Eden in the production of "Odette" at the Haymarket Theatre on April 25th. She has played the character during the three months' run of the piece with a simple grace and fascination of manner entirely her own, and our stage will experience a loss when she goes this autumn to Wallack's Theatre, New York, for an eight months' season.

Edwin Booth, the great American tragedian, was born at Maryland, in the United States, on November 13th, 1833, a night memorable for a splendid shower of meteors. It is a remarkable coincidence that Edwin L. Davenport and John McCullough, names bright and honoured in the history of the American stage, were born on the same date, in the same month, but in different years. Edwin Booth made his first appearance on the stage at the Boston Museum, on September 10th, 1849, as Tressil, in "Richard the Third." His father, Junius Brutus Booth, one of the greatest tragedians who ever lived, and the rival of Edmund Kean, was acting at this theatre, and Edwin assisted him as dresser. The prompter should have played Tressil, but not wishing to do so, persuaded young Booth to undertake the part, who consented, and

was duly underlined in the bills without his father being acquainted with the circumstance, who, when he read the announcement, simply remarked "Fool!" Upon the night of the performance, and when Edwin had dressed his father for Glo'ster and himself for Tressil, the eccentric parent took a chair, lit a cigar, and viewing his son with a critical eye, said: "Do you know that you are supposed to have been riding hard and far?" "Yes, sir." "Then where are your spurs?" "I haven't any." "Take mine," was the laconic rejoinder. The boy took the spurs, and after going on for his little scene with King Henry VI., found his father still sitting negligently in the chair, and composedly smoking his cigar. "Give me my spurs," he said; and this was the only comment that Edwin Booth's first professional appearance elicited from the parent whom he so fondly loved. But he afterwards discovered that his father had watched his first effort from the wing, with apparent satisfaction and interest, and then had hurried back to his nonchalant pose in the dressing-room.

In the season of 1864-5, Edwin Booth acted Hamlet at the Winter Garden Theatre, New York, for a hundred successive nights, thereby accomplishing a feat hitherto unprecedented in the annals of the American stage, a feat all the more remarkable for having been performed in the closing months of the Civil War, when New York was in a state of consternation and excitement. But previous to this Mr. Booth had endured a trying experience. In the summer of 1852 he went with his father to California, where he was left to rough it, and there and in the Sandwich Islands and Australia, he had four years of the most severe training that hardship, discipline, labour, and stern reality could furnish. He returned to the United States in the autumn of 1856, appearing first at Baltimore, and then touring down South. In the summer of 1860 he came to England and acted in London, Manchester, and Liverpool, but returned to America in 1862, and from September 21st, 1863, to March 23rd, 1867, he managed the Winter Garden Theatre, New York, which was burned down on the last-mentioned date. On February 3rd, 1869, he opened Booth's Theatre, New York, at a cost of a million and a quarter dollars, which he managed until early in the year 1874. Since then Mr. Booth has kept out of theatrical management, but his public appearances in the United States have been frequent and most brilliant. Mr. Booth visited this country in 1880, opening

the new Princess's Theatre on November 6th as Hamlet. He subsequently appeared at the same theatre as Richelieu, Bertuccio in "The Fool's Revenge," Othello, Iago, Petruchio, King Lear, and Shylock. His memorable engagement at the Lyceum, when he alternated the parts of Iago and Othello with Mr. Irving, will still be fresh in the memory of our readers. Mr. Booth played Richelieu at the Adelphi Theatre on Monday, June 26th, as his opening piece this season, and he is now acting Bertuccio at the same house.

Our Play-Box.

"RICHELIEU."

Lord Lytton's Play; reproduced at the Adelphi Theatre on Monday, June 26th, 1882, on the occasion of Mr. Edwin Booth's first appearance in London this season.

Cardinal Richelieu	Mr. Edwin Booth.	François	Mr. Wm. Younge.
Louis XIII.	Mr. J. G. Shore.	De Clermont	Mr. Hawtry.
Duke of Orleans	Mr. Samuel Fisher.	Captain of the Guard	Mr. D. Daniels.
Baradas	Mr. E. H. Brooke.	First Secretary	Mr. F. Mellish.
De Mauprat	Mr. Eben Plympton.	Second Secretary	Mr. J. Eversley.
De Beringhen	Mr. Lin Rayne.	Third Secretary	Mr. Arth. Gillmore.
Joseph	Mr. Robt. Pateman.	Marion de Lorme	Miss Bella Pateman
Huguet	Mr. Ed. Price.	Julie de Mortemar	Miss Ellen Meyrick

"MACBETH."

As acted at Drury Lane Theatre on Monday, July 3rd, 1882.

Macbeth	Mr. Wm. Rignold.	Seyton	Mr. Arth. Estcourt.
Macduff	Mr. J. H. Barnes.	Siward	Mr. Somerset.
Banquo	Mr. H. R. Teesdale.	Physician	Mr. W. D. Gresham.
Malcolm	Mr. Arthur Dacre.	Bleeding Officer	Mr. T. Nye.
Duncan	Mr. A. Matthison.	First Witch	Mr. Harry Jackson.
Rosse	Mr. A. C. Lilly.	Second Witch	Mr. Walt. Avondale
Lennox	Mr. Cook.	Third Witch	Mr. Harry Nicholls
Donaldbain	Miss L. Watkins.	Second Apparition	Master Barry.
Fleance and First Apparition	Miss Katie Barry.	Gentlewoman	Mrs. Barrett.
		Lady Macbeth	Madame Ristori.

"ELIZABETH."

Giacometti's Play in Five Acts; as acted at Drury Lane Theatre on Friday, July 14th, 1882.

Robert, Earl of Essex	Mr. J. H. Barnes.	Sir Francis Drake	Mr. T. Nye.
Cecil, Lord Burleigh	Mr. A. Matthison.	James VI.	Mr. Augustus Cook.
Lord Howard of Effingham	Mr. A. C. Lilly.	Hudson	Mr. W. D. Gresham.
Marquis di Mendoza	Mr. Walt. Avondale	Sir George Jackson	Mr. Somerset.
Davison	Mr. Harry Nicholls	Lady Sarah Howard	Miss Sophie Eyre.
Sir Francis Bacon	Mr. Arthur Dacre.	Lady Annie Burleigh	Miss Madge Carr.
		Mary Lambrun	Miss Agnes Thomas.

Elizabeth .. ... Madame Ristori.

Last year I went to Boulogne as usual—it seems, indeed, that we all find ourselves at Boulogne when the summer comes round—and when at Boulogne I visited the fair. There is plenty to see at the Boulogne fair, and much to buy if you feel so disposed. I saw some

curious sights—avenues of toy and curiosity shops, stacks of sweet-stuff; I saw that excellent comedian, Mr. J. L. Toole, trying to chaff an old Dutch spectacle-maker, who was not to be caught, however, by any amount of it; I saw small theatres and penny peep-shows, a hairless horse, and other monstrosities; a fortune-teller and a conjuror; but the sight that impressed me the most, hidden away in a canvas booth, was a giantess who gave her many admirers electric shocks! There she sat enthroned, this mountain of fat, an unwieldy but not a bad-looking giantess, a chatty, well-informed, amiable monstrosity; and her great delight was to catch hold of any visitor's hand in order that she might give him a tingle of electricity and make him jump. No matter where you touched the Brobdingnagian beauty, the result was the same. She was connected in some mysterious way with an electric battery, and communicated her effects. She was transmitting tinglers all day long, and this giantess was on the whole the best fun of the fair. Honestly I did not think it a very edifying entertainment, but it was well enough for a country fair. We were in the full enjoyment of our holiday, and there was no need to be squeamish. But suppose, as I was perambulating the canvas fair on the Haute Ville of Boulogne, some one had whispered in my ear that this electric giantess, if transported to London just as she sat or stood, without more ado, would fill to the utmost the largest theatre in London at the dullest part of the season and the hottest time of the year—suppose it had been suggested to me that good music would be put on one side, good singers cold-shouldered, beautiful ballets made a second consideration, our lovely English women rendered of no account, acting, singing, decoration, spectacle, art, all made subordinate to one abnormal monster—well, I should have laughed the Barnum to scorn who had such faith in monstrosities and the eccentricity of the English public. But, as it turns out, I should have been extremely wrong. Mr. William Holland of the Alhambra Theatre has proved that at any rate. He has discovered in Germany a giantess who does not give electric shocks, but who, massive, awkward, and unwieldy as she is, has managed to draw more people to the Alhambra Theatre than have ever before been known to assemble there at this time of year. I cannot say that I am particularly partial to anything that is unnatural, and I have no desire to see a giantess, except in a caravan at a fair.

I have been introduced to Marian, Mr. Holland's recent acquisition, and she is certainly an astounding young woman, but why she should have created such a furore at a theatre where the beauty of the English race is well represented, puzzles me not a little. Mr. John Ryder has declared ex cathedrâ that the play-going public does not want blank verse. Apparently it does not want singing, charming music, pretty dresses, scenery, and costly ballets; but it wants giantesses. This is a new departure in the matter of taste. Clubs are emptied, people remain in town longer than they intended to do, Parliament is disturbed, society is in a flutter and a ferment, because every evening at eleven o'clock at night, a young woman, "fearfully and wonderfully made," waddles across the stage, and allows an army of the most beautifully made women in the world to pass under her extended arms. Here is Miss Constance Loseby singing even more charmingly than ever, and soothing the ear of her audience; here is Mr. Paulton with his dry comicality; here are the best of dancing and decoration; but no one talks of anything else but Mr. Holland's giantess, with her amiable unexpressive face, her clumsy gait, and her speechless look of dismay. She has been confirmed, so we are told by the advertisements, and of her youthfulness there can be no doubt. It does not amuse me to hear that she is growing; I only pity the fate of the poor girl so cruelly ill-used by Nature. Mr. Holland has rightly estimated the condition of public taste. He went abroad in search of novelty that would suit the patrons of a popular theatre; he came back with a giantess. If he takes the trouble to visit Boulogne fair a few weeks hence he may discover other attractions that will give good dividends to the shareholders of the Alhambra Company. He may pick up a cheap spotted man, or enter into amicable arrangements with the lucky owner of the hairless horse! I was told the other day when I was discussing the vulgar realism of modern melodrama, that such plays were not for me, that they were not written for me or for anyone who thought as I did. But surely that does not prevent me from wondering at the changes in public taste or from uttering my feeble cry against the encouragement of the hideous in art, the vulgar in taste, the monstrous in nature!

As a relief to the German giantess, who does not speak a word

upon the stage, we have had, during the month, the pleasure of seeing Mr. Edwin Booth as Cardinal Richelieu in Bulwer Lytton's fine play, and acting with even more than his accustomed fire, and also Madame Ristori playing with smouldering power as Lady Macbeth and Elizabeth of England. As a whole, the performance of "Macbeth" at Drury Lane was not very creditable, though it is pleasant to recognise in Mr. J. H. Barnes an actor who can be bold without bluster and tender as well as strong. He played Macduff capitally and Essex with very genuine success. Who, I wonder, could have been responsible for the singular blunder in "Macbeth" of filling the stage with soldiers and lining the heath with men at Macbeth's first interview with the witches? Surely not a human being should know of this mysterious meeting except Banquo. What is the meaning of the tragedy if Macbeth's army is familiar with so important a secret? Effect is all very well, but it should be justifiable effect. C. S.

"WON BY HONOURS."

An Original Comedy-Drama in Four Acts, by L. S. Dee.

Produced for the first time on Friday, April 21st, 1882, at the Theatre Royal, Brighton.
Produced in London at the Comedy Theatre on Wednesday Afternoon, July 12th, 1882.

	BRIGHTON.	LONDON.
Edmond de Vasseur	Mr. F. H. Macklin	Mr. E. S. Willard.
Sir Arthur Vivian	Mr. J. B. Gordon	Mr. Frank Cooper.
Frank Tresham	Mr. Julian Cross	Mr. George Alexander.
M. de Luttaux	Mr. Alfred Burnham	Mr. T. W. Robertson.
Viscomte de Florac	Mr. Percival Clarke	Mr. H. Fitzpatrick.
M. de la Vallière	———	Mr. G. Mayrick.
Adolphe	Mr. F. Royston	Mr. de Verney.
Louise de Vasseur	Miss Blanche Henri	Mrs. E. S. Willard.
Lady Mabel Vivian	Miss Fanny Brough	Miss Dora Vivian.
Amy Keith	Miss Louise Gourlay	Miss Effie Liston.
Lady Brookbank	Miss Caroline Hunter	Miss Fanny Robertson.
Phœbe	Miss Sophie Fairbrother	Miss Marion Beckett.

This play is a very good work, if somewhat too lengthy for the amount of plot which it contains. Much of the first and the whole of the second act might be cut out without being missed, and the piece would gain by thus having its interest well sustained and evenly balanced. It would play closer and quicker, and in a shorter time. Thus reduced, it would stand a considerable chance of success when acted by a powerful, or rather, an adequate company. The dialogue, too, is sadly deficient in terseness, and is, indeed, grievously dull and commonplace. The story of the play is the old one of the sinful woman repentant of her weakness, striving to throw aside the glamour of wickedness and hollow gaiety for a life of innocence and peace. Edmund de Vasseur is the keeper of a Parisian gambling-house, and uses his sister Louise—who is his

only relation and under twenty-five years of age, and, therefore, according to the law of France, under the control of her brother—as a decoy for the rich frequenters of his establishment. The girl is young and pretty, and loves Sir Arthur Vivian, a mean individual who lets Louise imagine that he returns her affection, and does not say that he is already married and has a little son. This boy is saved from being run over by Louise—who has escaped from her brother's house—and in gratitude Lady Vivian takes her into her own house and protects her. Then Louise learns that Sir Arthur is married. Frank Tresham, who is seeking to find the man who has driven a friend of his to suicide, discovers him in De Vasseur, but not before he has told the scoundrel of his sister's whereabouts, and accused Louise of eloping with Sir Arthur. De Vasseur tries to force his sister back to his house, but is stopped from carrying out his desire for the fatal reason that he has forged a cheque which is in possession of young Tresham. This young man kindly consents not to prosecute De Vasseur if he will agree not to molest his sister. In this De Vasseur readily acquiesces, and so ends it. There are many incongruities in the play, but if judiciously altered, as I have suggested above, it might succeed. The chief character in the drama is that of De Vasseur, acted by Mr. E. S. Willard, and it is not too much to say that there are few actors on our stage who could have played the part with such intensity and art. For the heroine, as played by Mrs. Willard, I cannot say so much. The part requires a physical strength and force which Mrs. Willard does not possess. She suggested what she would do with the part had she the necessary power for it, but beyond suggesting the character she could do little else. Mr. George Alexander played with ease and lightness as Frank Tresham, but his performance was not sufficiently powerful in the one scene where a display of passion should have been made by the actor. Miss Dora Vivian was totally inadequate for the part of Lady Vivian, and besides looking tall and handsome, she did little else. Miss Effie Liston and Miss Fanny Robertson, Mr. T. W. Robertson, and Mr. de Verney, played smaller parts capitally. The play was well put on the stage, and at its conclusion Mr. Willard, in response to the well-meant applause of friends, led the blushing young authoress in front of the curtain. A. B.

"GAMMON."

A Comedy in Three Acts, by James Mortimer; founded on "La Poudre aux Yeux."
Produced at the Vaudeville Theatre on Thursday Afternoon, July 13th, 1882.

Mr. Humphrey Potts	Mr. J. F. Young.	Mrs. Potts	Mrs. W. Sidney.
Dr. Sweetman ...	Mr. J. Maclean.	Mrs. Sweetman ...	Mrs. Leigh.
Uncle Jonas Streaky	Mr. Edward Price.	Emily Sweetman ...	Miss G. Goldney.
Frederick Potts ...	Mr. J. R. Crawford.	Simmons	Miss Hardinge.
Jinks	Mr. W. Lestocq.	Lucinda	Miss Lydia Cowell.

Preceded by

"A BAD PENNY."

A Drama in One Act, by W. Lestocq.

Mr. Hyde	Mr. Walter Howe.	Harry Goodwin ...	Mr. Chas. Glenney.
Mr. Richard Hyde	Mr. W. Lestocq.	May Hyde	Miss Clara Calvert.

Mr. Mortimer's farcical comedy is avowedly founded on "La Poudre aux Yeux" of MM. Labiche and Martin, several adaptations of the play having already been performed in this country. The plot of the piece is much too slight, and the interest is hardly sustained during the three acts of the piece. The plot relates the absurd complications which arise from two families endeavouring to throw dust into each other's eyes by appearing to be much richer than they really are. The son and daughter of the rival families are betrothed, and only require their parents' consent to their marriage. The father and mother of the young man visit the house of his sweetheart to satisfy themselves as to the wealth of their son's intended bride, and the visit is in due course returned. The one family scatters sovereigns about the room with a reckless extravagance, whilst the other faction sinks in turn to an equally childish piece of folly. A squabble then arises as to the marriage settlements, and eventually matters are set right through the intervention of a relative, and the two fathers resolve never again to resort to "gammon." The play was excellently acted, and the author was enthusiastically called for at its conclusion. Mr. Edward Price, Mr. J. F. Young, and Mr. J. Maclean, together with Mrs. Sidney and Miss Leigh, shared the representation of the elder people between them, and Mr. J. R. Crawford and Miss Golding played the twins. Miss Lydia Cowell acted the small part of a servant-girl, and Mr. W. Lestocq also appeared in a comic part. Mr. Mortimer's play was preceded by a new one-act drama by W. Lestocq, entitled "A Bad Penny." The piece is a touching little story skilfully treated. An uncle has taken his niece, when a child, away from the control of his n'er-do-weel brother, and brought her up as his own child. She is engaged

to be married to a suitable young gentleman, and her happiness is nearly marred by the arrival of her scamp of a father, who turns up "like a bad penny." His presence, of course, is got rid of by means of one of those devices of which dramatists are so fond, and all ends happily. To judge Mr. Lestocq's little drama from its performance on Thursday would be unfair. Mr. H. R. Teesdale was to have played a principal part, but at the eleventh hour a letter was sent to the author saying that Mr. Teesdale was prevented from playing through "indisposition," and the part was read by Mr. Walter Howe; so that the piece had not a fair chance. Mr. Lestocq acted the disreputable brother with considerable skill, and the lovers were represented by Mr. Charles Glenney and Miss Clara Calvert, the latter of whom acted very naturally, and showed good promise of becoming a comedy actress of no mean order. A. B.

Our Omnibus-Box.

MR. MOWBRAY MORRIS, having resigned his duties as dramatic critic of the "Times," has written a book, and he is terribly afraid that someone will throw "rotten apples at his insignificant head." Really I do not think that many people, having read the book, would take the trouble to stoop down and pick up an apple, however decayed. For it is a silly, prejudiced, unnecessary, and misleading work, written evidently by a soured and disappointed man. The object of Mr. Mowbray Morris in inflicting on the reading world no less than two hundred and twenty-six pages of aggressive biliousness is apparently (A) to show his lordly superiority to the frailties of human nature in general and dramatic critics in particular; (B) to parade his intolerance towards Mr. Henry Irving as an actor and as an artist; (C) to hold up to hatred and contempt the dramatic critic of a popular newspaper, who is honoured with the distinction of so many stabs and sneers in the course of these two hundred odd pages that one would imagine Mr. Mowbray Morris, with all his vaunted superiority, were not guiltless of the human foible of an undignified feeling,

"My dreams presage
Some joyful news
at hand." Romeo &
Juliet

Henry Irving 1908

erroneously supposed to be essentially feminine, which I will not further particularise.

(A) Mr. Mowbray Morris, a man of education, well read, and with a nice taste for scholarship, attempted boldly and honourably to perform a task for which he was apparently ill-suited by disposition, taste, and training. He entered the lists to write dramatic criticisms for a daily paper, not according to his own conditions, but according to the established conditions of newspaper literature. He found the work—as I gather from the tone of this book—irksome, tiresome, and uncongenial to his temperament. He may have secretly despised the art he was appointed to encourage. So bored was he, and so contemptuous of his delegated duties, that I have observed he seldom arrived at the theatre till the play was well advanced, and often left it before the work he was appointed to criticise was half over. The indifference of Mr. Morris to the task of reviewing plays was notorious to his companions, and well known to most frequenters of the theatre. He began with a feeble style, and ended with an excellent manner of address, studiously imitated from the old essayists. The earlier criticisms of Mr. Morris in the "Times" were, I should think, unexampled for the curiosity of their diction. His later criticisms, however much one might disagree with them, were excellent essays, polished, elaborate, learned, and with a marked manner of their own. Most statements of opinion were qualified in a remarkable manner, but the pedantry of these essays was becoming popular. Now the conditions of newspaper literature and newspaper competition are such that a newspaper critic must have the faculty and facility, if needs be, of stating his opinions brightly and succinctly of a play that he has just witnessed on the same night it was produced. He must write quickly and intelligently, and on many occasions tell the public next morning what has happened overnight. It is a task in which every journalist practises himself. It is one of the primary conditions of journalism. It is no more difficult to write a dramatic essay immediately after seeing a play than to write a political leader immediately after hearing a debate. A man who cannot do this, however clever he may be, is comparatively useless as a newspaper critic, and this Mr. Morris, I take it, professed to be. No man could write better when shut up in his study, surrounded by his books, and with time to prepare his opinions and polish his

periods; and the pathetic appeal of Mr. Mowbray Morris for delayed criticism exposes, better than I could do, the weakness of his position. But even here Mr. Morris is strangely inconsistent, for in one part of his book he deprecates the "press and hurry of criticism," and in another sneers at a critic for postponing his judgment for another occasion. Take such a night, for instance, as the first night of a revival of a play by Shakespeare at the Lyceum. If the dramatic critics, or journalists, or whatever Mr. Mowbray Morris chooses to call them, are able and willing to tell the public, in a readable form, what has happened overnight, it is clear that the leading journals must secure the services of some such gentleman. All the style and scholarship in the world will not atone in journalism for torpidity. The journalist must be quick; not slow. In this knack, so far as I can see, Mr. Mowbray Morris alone failed. He was a good writer, but a slow journalist. Many writers before Mr. Mowbray Morris have failed at this kind of work when their powers were put to the test: why then should he be so angry with the men who have succeeded, and why should he amuse himself by throwing mud at his competitors? I say, on the evidence of his book, that he has done this. I say that, failing the courage to make a definite charge against one single individual, he has accused a whole body of public writers of subserviency and venality. I say that he has made accusations in his introduction that he is unable to prove. I say that when he alludes to a popular actor as "a liberal dispenser of champagne and chicken, *and other things perhaps more convenient*," he insults gratuitously an honourable man and an equally honourable profession, and has wholly misrepresented an occasion that brought together in friendliness and good fellowship the foremost representatives of every form of literature and art in London and the provincial cities, headed by Lord Houghton and Lord Lytton. I say that when he makes such an unworthy excuse for error as, "It may be that I am altogether wrong, and guilty, though indeed unwittingly, of a gross injustice; but surely one would sooner suppose a clever man overcome by the soft allurements of friendship, than going astray, as Johnson owned even he once did, through 'sheer ignorance,'" the writer becomes chargeable with Pharisaism, for he ought to know that he is guilty of a "gross injustice" against a whole body of upright and hard-working gentlemen as keenly sensitive to honour

as Mr. Mowbray Morris. I, for one, say that he is "wrong, guilty, and grossly unjust" when he puts forward hints and insinuations that he is utterly unable to substantiate.

(B) It would be superfluous to defend such an artist as Henry Irving against such an assailant as Mowbray Morris. The critic has the right of his own opinion—he has the liberty to state it. The world can judge between one and the other. But in his criticism of Mr. Irving this self-satisfied guide exhibits the most crying fault of all criticism—prejudice. I can conceive his not endorsing Mr. Irving's method in such characters as Othello and Romeo; I can conceive his differing with Mr. Irving on innumerable points; but I cannot conceive any student of the stage believing even Romeo and Othello to be worthy of nothing more than studied contempt. The artist who has given us Louis the Eleventh, Hamlet, Macbeth, Richard, Matthias, Eugene Aram, Charles the First, Lesurques, Robert Macaire, and every possible variety of character in the whole range of the drama, is so well entitled to respect, that he can afford to despise such criticisms as these. When Mr. Mowbray Morris has lived longer in the world, and has studied the stage for more than six years, he will learn to appreciate and delight in the aid given to contemporary art by such a student as Henry Irving. He is suffering from a disease for which there is a certain cure—youth. Mr. Irving has acquired his fame by a lifetime of work and study; Mr. Mowbray Morris will not pull it down by six years of carping or two hundred and twenty-six pages of superfine egotism.

(C) As to the critic of the popular newspaper so often assailed, no doubt he is perfectly able to defend himself against the sneers of Mr. Mowbray Morris whenever he is called upon to do so. The book as it stands is the condemnation of Mr. Morris. The enemy has written it, and that is enough. The public can judge between the bilious and the eruptive critic. The one retires whilst the other remains. The public can decide whether a man who writes of a performance as "full of charm, of sensibility, of *dainty* joyousness and of *dainty* melancholy," can, without danger, accuse a fellow-worker of affectation of style. Mr. Mowbray Morris calls the paper which so often makes him shudder *leonum nutrix*. Good! Of the two I should prefer to be the nursing-mother of lions than of

the rest of the feline race. The one brood can roar, the other can only scratch. The "eruptive" critic and Mr. Mowbray Morris approach the consideration of the drama from two opposite points of view. The one however affected has enthusiasm and sincerity of purpose to guide him; the other has an obvious distaste for the occupation to which he temporarily attached himself, aggravated by a deplorable egotism and a defiant self-consciousness. The one has kept on at his duties for nearly twenty years; the other abandons his post after six. The one loves the art he studies; the other hates the art he has not the temper to observe. There is one sentence, and one sentence only, in this exquisitely pretentious book that will command universal approval. Speaking of Mr. Lewis Carroll, our six-year critic says: "His letter *was just and amiable*—two qualities which are not always found together in English criticism." They are seldom found together in one sentence of this silly book.

Mr. Morris is of opinion that actors are apt to overrate their services as interpreters of Shakespeare. At Edinburgh last year, Mr. Irving had the hardihood to affirm that it was impossible to appreciate the poet more by reading than by seeing him acted. Mr. Irving could not have committed a greater outrage if he had given a supper and corrupted the whole community of critics with cigars. There is a Shakesperian student who has lost the illusions of his youth, and sees little on the stage but its narrowness and its mechanical devices. In the quiet of his study he can "more clearly comprehend the shifts and currents" of Hamlet's mind than by "casual glimpses through the haze of the footlights." This assertion makes it doubtful whether Mr. Morris has realised what the essence of great acting is. In reproducing again and again the illumination of an inspired moment lies the art of the tragic actor. It is his chief triumph, and his greatest difficulty, to imitate the startling and sometimes grand effects which seize the mind when it is, so to speak, in a blaze. How is it possible for the most deserving of critics, calmly sitting in a room, to comprehend the passion of Othello, or the malignity of Iago? Has anybody apart from the stage ever grasped in all its fulness the breathless climax of the play-scene in "Hamlet"? An active imagination may conjure up a fine picture, but it is in the nature of things impossible that it can present to the reader all the

breadth of effect and vivid detail produced by the actor's genius and skill. It is not enough to think what a terrible villain Iago is, and to comprehend the shifts and currents of his mind as they appear in his written words. You must see the man, hear the devilish persuasion of his voice, watch the seeming honesty and the subtle smile, grasp the world of meaning in attitude and gesture. In an inferior actor this may often be commonplace and uninforming.

It was because so many actors clung to traditions that had vitality only for those who made them, because there was for a long period so little independent thought upon the stage, that the greatest dramatic creations excited little interest in the play-going public, and Shakespeare for years spelt bankruptcy. But give us an artist of real weight and imaginative powers, and see whether the majority of intelligent people are content with reading Shakespeare. Mr. Morris knows they are not; indeed, he is by no means the last to admit that such an artist, whatever his mistakes, may do really valuable work. But with that singular propensity to find fault in the wrong place which mars so much of his criticism, Mr. Morris accuses Mr. Irving of trying to improve on Shakespeare, because the actor employs certain gestures, when playing Iago, which apparently did not suggest themselves to the critic in the quiet of his study. It is a pity the poet did not foresee this, for he might have supplied us with instructions as to the precise attitudes, looks, and intonations of his characters, which would have enabled everybody to figure as Macbeth or Iago on his own hearth-rug, while the unfortunate actor played to empty benches. But it is possible that the faculties of mankind may ultimately be so marvellously developed that any man may be able to carry on a dramatic performance in his own head, without any supernumeraries in the shape of actors, and without being tempted to ask the critics to supper.

Apropos of "Youth," the last Drury Lane melodrama, that did not suit the feeble fastidiousness of the latest example of dramatic Pharisaism, who beats his breast, makes broad his phylacteries, and thanks God he is not as other men are, our young friend proceeds to scratch a few more critics. After

having clawed at our good friend "G. A. S." for admiring the Drury Lane scenery, the work of Beverley and the best scenic artists of an unexampled time of scene painting, and not considering it, as he does, "tawdry panorama," he continues: "But another on the 'Daily Telegraph,' that *leonum nutrix*" (so clever, this little bit of Latin), "contrived to find in this barren stuff 'a forcible lesson of the stern truth of life,' *found in it again* (speaking from another oracle, Delian and Patarean Apollo!) the one touch of nature which lights to success. The one touch of nature! Really, when one remembers from whose lips these words first fell, such writing as this seems, if I may say so, little short of profanity." Such criticism, if I may say so, seems little short of showy nonsense. In the first place, there is not one word of truth in the comparison, and the statement of fact is wholly inaccurate. The two articles were not written by the same writer, but came from distinctly different authors. In the next place, that it should be profane to quote Shakespeare to illustrate a truth is a palpable absurdity. What harm can it do to Shakespeare to quote a line from "Troilus and Cressida?" The critic of the work of others should be correct in his facts before he draws conclusions and tries, like the actor he so often sneers at, to "assume the god, affect to nod, and seem to shake the spheres."

I have been looking up some of the criticisms contributed to what Thersites calls "one paper, and that no insignificant one," and my eye fell constantly upon a most appreciative and very just record of the career of a young actor who did very well whilst he was on the stage, and particularly distinguished himself as King William in "Clancarty," as Cool in "London Assurance," as the young lover in "Peril," and in a small but useful character in "Diplomacy." I am not disputing the justice of the remarks; they were sound, they were deserved, and I am certain that they were fairly and conscientiously written. But supposing a brother-writer, making use of private information and observation, had put an unjust colour on an obvious matter of opinion, and had written of it thus: "And when the critic is bound by ties of personal friendship, or, as may possibly happen, by ties of personal interest to the actor, it is surely inevitable, while human nature is what it is, that his judgment should be a little like the dyer's hand, 'subdued to what it works in'—inevitable that he should regard his Macbeth,

not as the brave weak man, overthrown by ambition and his terrible wife, but as a charming liberal dispenser of champagne and chicken, and other things perhaps even more convenient." What would the world have said of the writer had he written thus? Most probably it would have applauded him as a reformer of abuses. "Justum et tenacem propositi virum non vultus instantis tyranni mente quatit solidâ." But he might have heard above the applauding shouts, "Physician, heal thyself," or the more homely proverb about stones and glass houses.

Miss Florence Terry, in consequence of her approaching marriage, has retired from the stage. Her last appearance took place on Wednesday afternoon, June 21st, at the Savoy Theatre. The performance was an interesting one. Miss Marion Terry appeared as the Lady Hilda, and Miss Florence Terry acted the Lady Vavir in Mr. Gilbert's charming comedy of "Broken Hearts." Then came the trial scene from "The Merchant of Venice," with Mr. Irving in his great impersonation of Shylock. And for the last time the three sisters acted together: Miss Ellen Terry as Portia, Miss Florence Terry as Nerissa, and Miss Marion Terry as the Clerk. The memorable proceedings came to a close with Mr. Toole's amusing monologue sketch, "Trying a Magistrate." I clip the following short sketch of Miss Florence Terry's theatrical career from "The Stage," a well-conducted and accurate paper, steadily and surely making its way in the public favour, and of great interest to the dramatic profession:

"She is the younger sister of Miss Ellen and Miss Marion Terry, and made her début on the London stage on Wednesday, June 15th, 1870, at the Adelphi Theatre, as Louison, in an English version of Molière's 'Le Malade Imaginaire,' entitled, 'The Robust Invalid.' On Saturday, November 19th of the same year, she played Little Nell in the first performance of Andrew Halliday's play of that title. We next hear of her in 1876-7, when, in various provincial theatres, she acted the following parts: Lady Betty Noel, in 'Clancarty;' Cynisca, in 'Pygmalion and Galatea;' Myrza, in 'The Palace of Truth;' Dorothy, in 'Dan'l Druce;' and Jenny Northcote, in 'Sweethearts.' In the revival of 'The Turn of the Tide' at the Olympic Theatre she played the heroine, and in 1878 she acted Olivia in Mr. Wills's play of that name in the provinces. On April 14th, 1879, she appeared as the heroine in the production,

at the Haymarket Theatre, of 'Ellen; or, Love's Cunning.' When on tour last year with Mr. Charles Kelly, she played Beatrice Seymour in 'First in the Field,' Cissy Granby in 'Pair o' Wings,' and Lilian Vavasour in 'New Men and Old Acres.'"

Mr. John Clayton has just closed a most successful and interesting season at the Court Theatre. Mr. Godfrey's "Parvenu" was the very play that a light, careless, well-bred, after-dinner audience required. It was not profound, but it was pretty. There was more wit than wisdom in it. Admirably played and brightly written, it suited the easy manners of to-day. Those on the stage acted and talked pretty much as people act and talk off it. The imaginative faculties were hardly excited; but then, as Mr. Ryder observed about the blank verse, people do not want to think. "The Parvenu" will go at once into the country, where a genuine welcome is sure to await it. After the forced and vulgar wit with which the provinces have been entertained lately, Mr. Godfrey's dialogue will be a pleasant and wholesome relief. Mr. Anson is lost from the cast—a great, important, and serious loss, for his performance in this play is as good comedy as we can produce nowadays. It is first-class work, and to call it exaggerated is to talk nonsense. The litigious Ledger, a good fellow at heart, and angry against his own convictions, is pictured to the life. This is an almost faultless specimen of character acting. Mr. John Clayton will become the unaspirated Ledger during the provincial holiday. Mr. Alexander will be the lover instead of Mr. Forbes Robertson, and Miss Kate Bishop the loved one, vice Miss Marion Terry. Like a sensible manager, Mr. Clayton gets well ahead with his arrangements for the future. "The Parvenu" is not nearly exhausted for London, but two new plays are already ready for the Court—new plays by comparatively new men. Plenty of new blood, my masters. All youth, activity, and promise at the Court. The first play is by Mr. Charles B. Stephenson (Bolton Rowe of old) and Mr. Brandon Thomas, the clever young actor at the St. James's Theatre. The second play is by that very clever little artist and writer, "Dot" Boucicault, who has adapted for the stage Rice and Besant's story, "The Chaplain of the Fleet."

Miss Kate Pattison may certainly be congratulated on the

complete success of her first tour as manageress, during which she visited Glasgow, Edinburgh, Manchester, Liverpool, and Brighton, a performance at the Crystal Palace on the 11th bringing the tour to a happy conclusion. Whatever may be the merits or demerits of Mr. Merivale's clever play, "The Cynic, or Faucit of Balliol," it has hit the taste of provincial play-goers. In Edinburgh especially, it created quite an excitement, and much of the success achieved is certainly due not only to Miss Pattison's and Mr. Hermann Vezin's admirable representation of the principal characters, but to the general excellency of the entire company by which Miss Pattison surrounded herself. Everyone seemed fitted to his or her part, and the play was thoroughly well mounted. The "Edinburgh Courant" writes: "Miss Pattison's representation of the heroine displayed dramatic resources which cannot fail to place her on a high level in the profession. Her representation was characterised by a grace and womanly insight, combined with a fervour of expression, which not unfrequently reminded us of Mrs. Kendal at her best—and this is high praise. The scene with Faucit at the end of the fourth act was given with an intensity which fairly brought down the house." Mr. Vezin, as Count Lestrange, had a part singularly adapted to his cynical polished style, and his withering sarcasms on the follies and vices of the day were delivered in a subdued and colloquial manner which recalled the highest school of French acting. Mr. Edward Rose acted the part of the Hon. Jem Gosling with considerable humour; Mr. John Benn looked the handsome athlete, Guy Faucit, to the life; Mrs. Willoughby was equally well suited to the character of Lady Luscombe; Mr. Louis Armstrong, Mr. Laurence Cautley, and Mr. Lawrence Grey gave special significance to the parts of Lord Rosherville, Sir Brummel Coates, and Delves; Mr. Blackbourne as the Count's confidential valet, who "never takes his clothes, but is always dressed exactly like his master," made quite a feature of his small part; and Mr. T. Holmes, Miss Herbert, and Miss Meredith completed an excellent cast. The programme was strengthened on Miss Pattison's benefit nights with a recitation by Mr. Vezin and scenes from "The Hunchback," in which Miss Pattison appeared to great advantage as the vivacious Helen, to the Modus of Mr. Earle Douglas.

Miss Alleyn, whose portrait and memoir appeared in The Theatre in November, 1881, made her first appearance in London

on Thursday afternoon, July 15th, when she played Juliet in the balcony scene of Shakespeare's play, and Rosalind in the forest scene of "As You Like It." The performance was only a scratch one, got up for the occasion of a benefit, and, under the circumstances, it would be unfair to judge the actress. Miss Alleyn's merits have several times been alluded to in these pages, and it is certain that a bright future awaits the young actress.

Mr. Abbey has determined that Mrs. Langtry shall be supported by an excellent company in America, and for this purpose he has engaged, amongst others, Mr. J. G. Taylor and Miss Kate Pattison. Miss Pattison will play Mrs. Montressor, Volante, and Celia.

Another amateur has joined the professional ranks. This time he comes from Liverpool, where the gentleman in question, Mr. Charles Fabert, is well-known both in private and theatrical circles. He was a member of the "Old Boys" Club attached to the Liverpool Institute, and his acting of many various characters has frequently been extolled by the local press. Mr. Fabert has been engaged by Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft, and will, I believe, appear in "The Overland Route," which is to be the next production at the Haymarket.

Mr. Martin F. Tupper is a good friend to the readers of this magazine. Here he has written in telling prose and stately verse. To these columns he first contributed some of those historical dialogues which are found invaluable at private theatricals intelligently conducted, and in "The Theatre" he recently had a platform on which he was able to speak about the stage and the pulpit in his own fearless and liberal spirit. The famous author of "Proverbial Philosophy" has now brought out a most interesting little volume containing three five-act plays and twelve dramatic scenes. I recommend it cordially to my readers both for its interest and its serviceableness. The student will welcome it; and it will be found invaluable for the purposes of private theatricals and drawing-room recitations. And it will increase Mr. Martin Tupper's fame as a poet and a lyrical writer. For he is a lyrical writer of great gift, as all will acknowledge who are familiar with "King Orry's Grave," and with a poem called "Behind the

Veil," here published for the first time. Mr. Martin Tupper's new book is called "Dramatic Pieces," it is handsomely got up, and published by W. H. Allen and Co., of Waterloo-place, S.W.

Mr. D'Oyly Carte's provincial "Patience" company compares very favourably with the London cast. The title-rôle is played by Miss Ethel Pierson, who first won her laurels on the stage as a member of a well-known amateur club in Liverpool, and who is possessed of a fresh and sweet voice. She acts with a charming air of simplicity and sweetness, and it would be difficult to find anyone better suited to the part of Patience. I predicted the success of this clever little lady some few years since when she stood out so prominently amongst the minor characters at the early representation of "The Little Duke" at the Philharmonic Theatre. There is no mistaking real talent. She finds valuable assistance in Miss Rita Presano, who should make her mark in comic opera ere long, in Miss Clara Deveine, in Miss Elsie Cameron, and in Miss Fanny Edwards. Mr. George Thorne gives just the right touch of humour to the character of Bunthorne, Mr. Arthur Rouseby sings capitally as Grosvenor, and Mr. G. Byron Browne, Mr. Albert James, and Mr. James Sidney are efficient representatives of the Colonel, the Major, and the Lieutenant respectively.

The first production of a new play by Mr. Charles Reade, entitled "Single Heart and Double Face," took place at the Royal Princess's Theatre, Edinburgh, on June 1st, the piece being played by Mr. James Buchanan and a company who are travelling with "It's Never Too Late to Mend." The new play is a dramatic version of a novel by Mr. Reade, bearing the same title, which is appearing in "Life," and was produced in Edinburgh, and played for a night or two, in order to secure the author's right in it for stage production. Mr. Reade has no doubt been warned by recent dramatic squabbles, and, with characteristic determination, has forestalled any attempt at stealing his property.

A new play, in four acts, entitled "Conspiracy," by George Lash Gordon, was produced at the Prince of Wales Theatre, Liverpool, on the 16th of June, before a numerous assemblage of appreciative auditors. It deals with the dangers a woman runs

in continuing—after a loveless union with an unsympathetic nature—to cherish memories of a past affection. The practical illustration given in the play is through the medium of George Hesketh, Austin Melville, and Hester Daventry. The two latter have been lovers, but owing to Melville's supposed death, and the conventional family misfortunes, Hester is induced to marry Hesketh. Melville hovers about Hester in the guise of her husband's friend, and seeks to ruin both husband and wife. He succeeds in his first plan so far as to get Hesketh convicted on a false charge of forgery, and is on the point of consummating his hopes of Hester when his roguery is discovered. The end is a reconciliation of husband and wife, with every prospect of the pardon of the former for the crime which he had not committed. The piece had not the advantage of a very strong cast. The author was unable to do himself anything like justice in his portrayal of George Hesketh, his emotion being hard and unreal. Mr. W. Morgan made a good deal out of a small comedy part, and Master Charlie Kitts displayed a bright intelligence of elocution and action in his presentation of a small boy named Bertie. The other male characters were indifferently played. Among the ladies, Miss Emily Norton-Forde may be congratulated on a sympathetic performance of the somewhat ungrateful part of the heroine. Miss Carrie Lee Stoyle, who had the bulk of the comedy phase of the play on her shoulders, gave a bright enjoyable rendering of her lines, and played throughout with a droll appreciation of the humour of the character.

When "Drink" is revived at the Adelphi, the part of Virginie will be played by Miss Ada Neilson (Mrs. Allen Thomas), who performed it very successfully when the play first went on tour in the provinces.

Miss Geneviève Ward's autumn tour with "Forget-Me-Not" begins on August 28th, and will include Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dublin, and other important towns and cities. Miss Ward has engaged Mr. W. H. Vernon to play the part performed in London by Mr. Clayton, and her company also includes Miss Rose Roberts, Miss Katie Lee, and Miss Millward.

Miss Ada Ehrenhoff gave a dramatic recital at the Steinway

Hall on Friday afternoon, June 30th. She recited with pathos and feeling the poem of "Mad Marie," by Harriet L. Childe-Pemberton (which originally appeared in this magazine for last September), and also "My Brother George's Tragedy," and Hood's "Demon Ship." With Miss Cowen she also recited selections from "Two Gentlemen of Verona" and "Fast Friends."

On Tuesday evening, June 23rd, Mr. John Bevan gave a lecture on the life and writings of Charles Dickens, in the Town Hall, Kilburn. Mr. Bevan's lecture was very entertaining, and was listened to by a large audience. By the way, Mr. Bevan, whose address is 24, Regent Street, Waterloo Place, S.W., is willing to give his services in aid of any charitable institution.

Miss Edith Lynd, a clever and charming actress, after three years' retirement from the stage has returned to it, and has recently been playing with great success the part of Grace Darling in "Humanity," at the Standard Theatre.

Assuredly an enterprising actor is Mr. Frank T. Frayne, of New York, who, requiring two lions for a new piece in which he acts the part of Andronicus, has gone out to Africa to hunt them. His business manager, Mr. W. Barry, goes with him in his remarkable quest.

Miss Adah Grey, an American actress, is said to have played Lady Isabel, in "East Lynne," three thousand five hundred times.

One of the prettiest songs that has been published for a very long time is Ettore Gelli's "Take Back the Flower" (Stanley Lucas, Weber and Co.). The poetry is by Colonel Hughes Hallett, and very charming it is too, and the melody is of exceptional beauty. Everybody knows that Mrs. Hughes Hallett, neé Von Schomberg, sings magnificently, and those who have heard her rendering of this song are not likely easily to forget the treat she afforded them.

The Misses Huntington—two charming young American ladies—gave an "Hour of Music" recently at Mrs. Jeune's, which was largely attended. Miss Agnes Huntington possesses

one of the finest contralto voices heard here for many years. Its tone is full, even, and harmonious. She sings with great ease, and when she has more fully mastered her art, will doubtless be a great acquisition to the lyric stage, for she has all the necessary qualifications, grace of manner, and a fine personal appearance. Her sister, who is equally handsome, is a remarkably brilliant pianiste.

The matineé given at the Dowager Marchioness of Tweedale's, recently, was one of the pleasantest of the season. Mdlle. Meilhan the bénéficiaire on this occasion, is already well known in London as an actress and singer of a peculiar class, in considerable vogue in drawing-room entertainments. Since Mdlle. Hortense Damain there has been no one like her for elegance and grace and for that kind of espièglerie which is so peculiar to the French. Mdlle. Meilhan was admirably supported by M. Berton in the pretty comedietta of "La Date Fatale," and in another piece by no less a personage than Madame Modjeska, who acted in French and of course to utter perfection.

"A Royal Amour," by R. Davey (Remington and Co.), has been one of the most universally well reviewed books of the season, and consequently one of the most successful. It gives, independently of a very exciting story, a graphic picture of England under Charles II.

Mr. H. A. Rogers, of 41, North Street, Manchester Square, writes to me as follows:

"I am publishing an etching of Colley Cibber, and it may interest your readers to read a short notice of it. The etching is executed in a high style of art by Mr. C. W. Sherborn, the portrait being copied from the engraving of Colley Cibber prefixed to his "Apology," and which itself is an engraving from after Vanloo's well-known and beautiful picture of that eminent dramatist and actor.

"Portraits of this actor have now become very scarce, and it was with a view to enabling his admirers to obtain a portrait of him that this one was executed. The plate is a private one, and in selling them it is merely sought to pay expenses. The number of impressions pulled is very limited—in the case of

India-proofs, one hundred, and about the same number on Japanese paper. The size is eight inches by eleven."

Drawing-room performances are getting more in favour every day. While many amateurs desert the dramatic clubs to enrol themselves in the profession, actors of talent are leaving the stage for the drawing-room. M. Daniel Bac of the "Variétés" is among that number. In connection with Mdlle. Marie Gosselin he is now giving a most clever entertainment in the London "salons." Two monologues each and a short play for two, is generally the evening's fare. I have been fortunate enough to witness several times this artistic treat. M. Daniel Bac "makes up" for his recitations, and in a few minutes becomes what he intends to represent; no traces of the art used being detectable even without the barrier of footlights. This is a remarkable feat. His elocution is excellent, his rendering of the different sentiments, whether pathetic or comic, perfect. M. Bac is a true artist. Mdlle. Marie Gosselin has not acted on the stage, and so lacks M. Daniel Bac's theatrical experience, but she is a débutante of great promise, and shines especially in the "petites comédies."

Among the interesting events of the musical season ranks the advent of M. Vladimir de Pachmann, the new pianist. He, like Rubinstein, is of the romantic school, and, like the great master, unites with a powerful and brilliant execution, exquisite delicacy and expression.

A Correspondent writes:—"Though somewhat out of the usual course of contributions to your admirable periodical, the following historical fact connected with the ancient town of Penryn in Cornwall may prove interesting to your readers as sufficiently demonstrating that players have at least in one critical emergency contributed to the national good.

"About the year 1587, when the Spanish Armada was hovering on the coast, a company of strollers were performing a dramatic piece called 'Samson' in a barn at Penryn. During the performance, some Spanish men-of-war having suddenly landed a body of men from their boats, they were in full and silent march (in the dark) with design to surprise, plunder, and burn the town; when, fortunately for the inhabitants, just at that very instant the players

in the town having let Samson loose to fall upon the Philistines, the sound of drums and trumpets, and the tremendous shout set up by the spectators, being heard by the Spanish detachment, they apprehended that the townsmen were coming down upon them in great force, and, overcome with panic, the invaders turned tail and scampered back precipitately to their ships. The people of Penryn formerly held an annual procession in commemoration of this signal service, but I am not aware that the custom still exists."

The second tour of "Engaged" proved much more successful than the first, which took place a few years ago. Then Mr. George Honey was the Cheviot Hill; Mr. Edgar Bruce, the Belvawney; Miss Louise Hibbert, the Belinda; and Miss Julia Stewart, the Maggie. This time the Cheviot Hill has been Mr. F. H. Macklin; the Belvawney, Mr. Percival Clark; the Belinda, Mrs. Macklin (Miss Henri); and the Maggie, Miss Louisa Gourlay; Miss Fanny Brough playing Minnie. In the absence of Mrs. Macklin, through illness, Miss Brough has played Belinda.

The proposed visit of the Parsee Dramatic Company, announced in our last number, has attracted some attention, and excited much interest. The feeling is that their artistic success is tolerably assured; while, under proper advice and judicious management, the commercial phase of the enterprise may be equally satisfactory. Our Indian friends must not be too ambitious, and should secure only a moderate-sized house—one which they may easily fill. They should select a time of year—say the month of May—when, although the London season has commenced, the rush of entertainments has not yet set in. Then they should, as far as possible, carefully maintain the national character of their performances, and should depend, for the most part, upon purely Indian dramas. On the other hand, it would not be uninteresting to see how they treat our own plays, although it is to be feared that no very good purpose would be served by presenting, in an Indian dress, such an essentially modern play as "Aurora Floyd." The quality of the proposed combination company will be remarkably fine, and will include some of the foremost native actors—men whose names are familiar throughout India. There

is a comedian in the troupe who in unction, spontaneity, and originality is said to equal some of our best actors of low comedy. There is another member of the troupe whose versatility enables him to be equally at home in "Hamlet," or in a screaming farce. Indeed, there is every promise of acting of a very high order, together with scenery and dresses of a most characteristic description, being brought to the assistance of these interesting plays. The complete novelty of the experiment will alone attract many people to the performances, while the exceedingly droll character of the lighter pieces will attract many more. On the other hand, the large class of thinking play-goers, who follow with interest the various developments of the drama, will be certain to seize this opportunity for a highly interesting study.

Madame Janauschek says that she is coming to London to "try her luck" again. If she appears as Lady Macbeth, Queen Katherine of Aragon (Henry VIII.), Brunhilde, and Lady Dedlock, "doubled" with Hortense, in "Bleak House," notwithstanding her lack of youth, to put it delicately, she is sure to be most successful. Her Lady Macbeth is a more thoroughly Shakesperian rendering of the character than is Ristori's, and her Katherine is simply superb.

"M'Ami Invan" is the name of a new valzer per canto, by Vincenzo Losena, which is creating a furore in Italy just now. The melody is charming, and exceedingly "taking." It is published by Lucca and Co., Milan and Paris.

In consequence of the pressure on my space last month, I was obliged to hold over my usual notices of the amateur performances. I now print them :

In connection with the opening of a new Liberal Hall in Sturton-town, the Cambridge Reform Dramatic Club, assisted by lady amateurs, gave four very successful performances on May 31st, and June 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, under some distinguished patronage. Craven's "Chimney Corner" and "Old Honesty" were presented on alternate evenings, followed by the farce which has been made famous by Mr. J. L. Toole, "The Steeplechase." The amateurs have for their president Mr. J. Willis Clarke, M.A., a gentleman of considerable literary reputation, and who has for some time

been connected with the University A. D. C. To his valuable mentorship the R. C. D. A. doubtless owe much of their growing popularity. The two principal pieces were cast as follows:

"CHIMNEY CORNER."

Solomon Probity ... Mr. J. Mouel.	Charles Chitty ... ... Mr. H. J. Dall.
Peter Probity ... ... Mr. C. F. Panchand.	Sifter ... ... Mr. D. Case.
John Probity ... ... Mr. T. C. Carter.	Patty Probity ... ... Miss Cooper.
Grace Emery ... ... Miss A. Miller.	

"OLD HONESTY."

Michael Bradshaw ... Mr. J. Mouel.	Septimus Hook ... ... Mr. H. C. Stearn.
Joseph Bradshaw ... Mr. W. Rumbold.	Toby Perch ... ... Mr. J. N. Digby.
Sir Perkins Besborough Mr. H. J. Dall.	Dame Bradshaw... ... Miss Cooper.
Mary ... ... Miss A. Miller.	

A very pleasant "invitation performance" was given by the Hampstead Amateur Dramatic Society at St. George's Hall on June 15th. The principal item in the programme was Mr. Palgrave Simpson's pretty domestic drama, "Broken Ties," which was, on the whole, effectively played, despite a somewhat too-frequent resort to the services of the prompter on the part of more than one of the leading actors. As Lionel Warner, the artist who has been deserted by, and is finally reconciled to his wife, Mr. Mark Keogh displayed great ability, and in the later scenes a considerable amount of pathetic power. Mr. Keogh has a capital appearance, a good voice and manner, and is evidently an enthusiast in his art. Mr. Frank Leigh, as his son, Herbert Warner, was manly and earnest, his chief defect being an apparent tendency to confound the outward symptoms of mental grief with those of physical suffering. Mr. F. Macey gave an amusing sketch of the opera-mad baronet, Sir John Richmond, but Mr. A. Rowney, as his son, Randal Richmond, would have done better had he refrained from the temptation to exaggerate the objectionable feature of the character. Mr. W. T. Pugh played with quiet effect as Lord Castletowers. Miss M. Wardroper proved the possession of no little earnestness and power as La Silvia, the erring but finally repentant wife; and Miss Kate Macarthur and Miss M. Brown rendered valuable assistance in less prominent characters. The drama was followed by Planché's quaint musical farce, "The Loan of a Lover," in which the chief honours deservedly fell to Miss Evelyn Spyer for her very clever acting and singing as Gertrude. Mr. Keogh proved his versatility by a most diverting rendering of Peter Spyk, the stolid Dutch farmer whom nothing but jealousy can arouse. Miss

Macarthur was a very pretty and amusing Ernestine, and the remaining characters were all satisfactorily sustained. The accompaniments to the songs were well played by Mr. Norfolk Megone's excellent orchestra, which also gave some capital selections during the evening. The hall was crowded by an evidently well-pleased audience.

"An Unequal Match" and "Creatures of Impulse" were performed by the Philothespian Club on June 17th at St. George's Hall. The high reputation for all-round excellence which the performances of this club have long enjoyed, was worthily maintained on this occasion, and the entertainment was thoroughly enjoyed by a rather inconveniently crowded audience. In "An Unequal Match," it is not too much to say that Miss Helen Maude, as Hester Grazebrook, fairly surprised her audience. The character is one that, by reason of its constant variety, offers no small difficulties even to a practised actress; but alike as the simple, trusting country girl, as the cruelly repressed and justly jealous wife, and as the pretended woman of the world, demonstrating in her own person the odiousness of the society code of manners, Miss Helen Maude acted with a grace, tenderness, and fidelity to nature that it would be difficult to praise too highly. Her play of facial expression was in itself a study; and she may be congratulated upon having once more proved that she possesses dramatic ability of a very high order. Miss C. Weston, despite an excessive deliberation of utterance, gave much effect to the character of the malicious Mrs. Montressor; and Miss Eleanor Rothsay deserves a special word of praise for her bright and amusing Bessy Hebblethwaite. Mr. Charles Myers, a very clever actor, has played parts better suited to his style than that of Harry Arncliffe; but he brought to his task an amount of earnestness and intelligence that could not fail to ensure success. Mr. G. H. Phillips gave full point to the querulousness of Sir Sowerby Honeywood: and Mr. F. J. Lowe acted with much humour and spirit as Dr. Botcherby. Mr. Bernard Partridge's Grazebrook was a very clever piece of character acting; and Mr. F. Upton showed genuine comic power as the confidential servant Blenkinsop, his efforts being ably seconded by Mr. E. W. Jaquet as his rival Tofts. The last act would have been improved by further rehearsal; but the club must be congratulated on a completeness

of ensemble not too frequently met with on the amateur stage. The lateness of the hour cut short the performance of "Creatures of Impulse," but not before the audience had obtained a glimpse of the drollery of Messrs. Harding Cox, Phillips, and Hallward, and had enjoyed some charming singing by Mrs. Harding Cox.

Two amateur performances were given at the Corn Exchange, Newark, on Thursday and Friday, June 22nd and 23rd, in aid of the building fund of the local hospital. On the Thursday, "Plot and Passion" was performed; on the Friday, "Uncle's Will" and "A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing" were the attractions. The principal rôles were undertaken by Lady Monckton and Sir Charles Young; and other characters were sustained by Madame de Sarria, Miss Holden, Miss Amy Holden, Miss Antoinette Didier, Miss Olga FitzGeorge, Captain A. FitzGeorge, R.N., Captain A. F. Liddell, R.A., Mr. C. G. Allan, etc.

The Connaught Dramatic Club, the latest addition to the ranks of the amateur societies, gave its inaugural performance at St. George's Hall on Saturday, June 24th; "Our Bitterest Foe" and "The Ticket-of-Leave Man" being the pieces selected for performance. The new club may be congratulated on a very successful start, though it did not avoid the fault, so common to amateurs, of offering an entertainment of inordinate length. A five-act drama is surely sufficient to tax the energies of any company of non-professional actors, without a preliminary piece; and to sit out an amateur performance lasting from half-past seven to close upon midnight is too much to expect from the most indulgent of friends. In the pretty little drama with which the performance opened, Mr. A. G. H. Burridge distinguished himself by a dignified and effective rendering of the stern Russian soldier, General Von Rosenberg; and Miss Ella Sterling was natural and sympathetic as the heroine, Blanche d'Evran. Of Mr. B. W. Ford, who appeared as Henri de la Fère, we are compelled to say that his performance was the one example of hopelessly bad acting seen during the evening. "The Ticket-of-Leave Man" was, on the whole, very well played, and the stage-management was, for a new club, surprisingly good. Mr. O. T. Clark's performance of Bob Brierley was marked by an

amount of intelligence and feeling that went far to compensate for his lack of physique for the part; and Mr. Cyril Kingsley, as the scoundrel Dalton, acted well, and with a commendable absence of exaggeration. Another quiet but very effective piece of acting was the capital Hawkshaw of Mr. B. Barnato, the president of the club; and the Melter Moss of Mr. Barrett, and the Green Jones of Mr. M. Hassan, if a little over-coloured, were by no means without merit. Mr. Barnidge was amusing as the innkeeper Maltby; but Mr. J. Hassan was far too obtrusive as Sam Willoughby. As May Edwards, Miss Mignon Murielle played with tenderness and refinement; Miss F. Florence gave a very bright and clever sketch of the flighty Emily St. Evremond, and Miss Rosean made the most of the part of the loquacious Mrs. Willoughby. The performance, which was for the benefit of the Railway Benevolent Institution, was fairly well attended.

A new farcical comedy, entitled "Fizz," was produced at the Ladbroke Theatre on July 3rd, the author being Mr. T. G. Bailey, an amateur actor who has recently joined the professional ranks. Of Mr. Bailey's skill as a dramatist it is difficult to speak favourably. Mr. Bailey apparently has taken the second act of "The Member for Slocum," and sandwiched it with an elaboration of "The Happy Pair;" or, possibly, he may have obtained his plot direct from "Le Supplice d'une Femme." However it may be, "Fizz" is not original. The author appeared as a flighty young husband tired of the sweets of matrimony, Miss Francis M. Ryan as his neglected wife; Mr. Arthur Leslie played Jack Gunn, a man about town; Miss Laura Vernon, a grass widow of utopian views; and Misses Morris and Thompson represented a couple of sprightly maids-in-waiting. The piece was fairly acted, and was well received.

The Pilgrim Players made another appearance before a Bedford Park audience in the theatre belonging to the estate on July 4th. The pieces selected for representation were the operetta of "Retained on Both Sides," and Mr. W. S. Gilbert's comedy of "Tom Cobb;" but as the tenor, after the fashion of tenors, had a cold, the operetta fell through, and a recitation, substituted for

the first piece at the last moment, was, owing to the disappointment of the audience, not so well received as it deserved to be. But the thorough success of "Tom Cobb" made ample amends for the failure of the operetta. Mr. G. A. Sala ought to write an history of the admirable plays which have failed on the stage. "Tom Cobb," when it was first produced, was not a success. Nevertheless, it deserves to be reckoned among the happiest dramatic efforts of its accomplished author. In selecting this play for representation, the Pilgrim Players showed great confidence in their own powers, and that confidence was amply justified by the result. The laughter was so hearty and incessant that some portions of the play had to be gone through in a sort of dumb-show. Mr. Power as Colonel O'Fipp was simply perfect. Nothing could exceed the humour and freshness of this admirable impersonation. Mr. Stacke's Tom was a carefully-studied and highly-finished piece of acting, and Mr. Waterton's Whipple was a very creditable performance. Miss Mary Brown looked bewitching as Matilda O'Fipp, and acted the part with great spirit and proficiency, taking the stage with ease and grace, and showing not the slightest trace of the amateur.

A most interesting "Reading from Shakespeare" was given by Lady Martin, Mr. Henry Irving, Sir Theodore Martin, and others at 31, Onslow Square, on the 20th of July. The programme is so interesting that it may well be preserved here as a record of a memorable and delightful evening.

"MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING."

Beatrice ... ... Lady Martin.	Leonato ... ... Rev. Alfred Ainger.
Hero ... ... Miss Rosina Filippi.	Antonio ... ... Sir Theo. Martin.
Ursula ... ... Miss Stokes.	Claudio ... ... Mr. Trevor.
Benedick ... ... Mr. Henry Irving.	Don Pedro ... ... Mr. Benson.

Friar ... ... Mr. W. Farren, Junr.

SLEEP-WALKING SCENE FROM "MACBETH."

Lady Macbeth ... Lady Martin. | Attendant ... ... Miss Stokes.

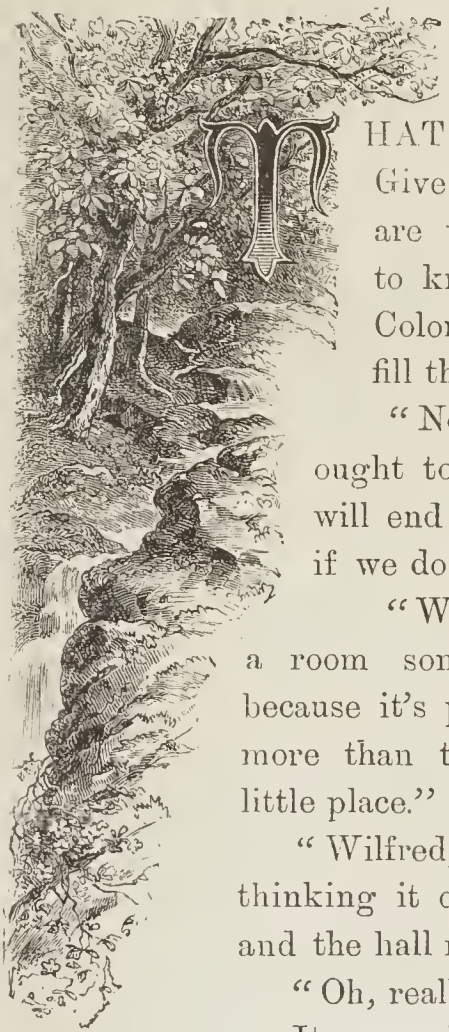
Physician ... ... Mr. W. Farren, Junr.

OSLERS' Table Glass, Chandeliers, Lustres, Wall Lights, Mirror Brackets, Duplex Lamps, Glass and China Vases, Ornaments, Table Decorations, Flower Stands, Dinner Services, Dessert Services, Tea Services, Breakfast Services in Minton's and Worcester Porcelain and Stone China. Sole Agents for the Venice and Murano Glass Company. London Show Rooms, 45, Oxford Street, W.

The Theatre.

SEPTEMBER, 1882.

OUR PARTY.



By Gilbert Farquhar.

"THAT is quite out of the question, my dear. Give a party! Why, impossible! Where are we to put the people, I should like to know? You would have to ask Mrs. Colonel Splothering, and she herself would fill the house."

"Nonsense!" answered my wife. "We ought to return our friends' civilities. People will end by never asking us outside our doors if we do not."

"Well, then, if it must be, we must hire a room somewhere, or get a house lent us; because it's physically out of the question to get more than twenty people at the most into this little place."

"Wilfred," said Maria, "bosh! I've been thinking it over. I allow the staircase is narrow and the hall rather inconvenient."

"Oh, really," I said, "do you?"

It was quite impossible to walk two abreast on our one ladder of a staircase. Jane the housemaid and the coal-box had to go up and down crab-fashion. As for the hall, there was none; the last step of the ladder led on to the front-door mat.

"But," continued my wife, not noticing my sarcastic interruption,

"there is this little dining-room, your room behind, and the leads, all en suite. I could tent the leads in, and put up a sort of temporary staircase leading into the window of the children's room on the first floor, which opens into the drawing-room. Tea could be in our bedroom, and that little hole you dress in is quite big enough for cloaks. Only let us try to make the people circulate through this room, your room, and up the stairs on the leads, so as to ease our real staircase, and the thing's done. Old Booseycott will come and play; then, too, we can ask Sir James and Lady Fullyjames, whom the Fitzwilliam Potts are so anxious to meet. Do, dearest," added Maria most winsomely. "Let's light a candle for once, and, success or not, we can talk of our party afterwards as a 'fit accomply.'"

"Yes, it would be a case of fits, I've very little doubt," I murmured. Then pulling myself together and assuming all the authority of manner I had at my control: "Maria," I said, "it cannot and shall not be. My room behind this has the accumulation of ten years in it. How can I have all my correspondence, books, and work carted off higgledy-piggledy? The little hole I dress in is also chokeful of papers and things. Then where, pray, are we to sleep; and what on earth is to become of the children? No party ever given is worth a fortnight's chaos and utter misery to this quiet and heretofore unambitious family."

My better-half whimpered. "Think how pleased Uncle Shortman would be," she said.

"I don't think he would at all," I answered. "He'd call it reckless extravagance, and very likely not come."

"I'll pay for it out of my own money."

Dear me, how often was I to hear Maria say she would pay out of her own money! That thousand pounds she brought me was indeed inexhaustible; everything she wanted that I thought unnecessary or extravagant was to be defrayed out of that sum. During our ten years of married life yearly trips to the sea, drives, concerts and play-tickets, bazaars, flower-shows, bonnets, and what-nots for the children, to say nothing of music and singing lessons in later years—all these were supposed to come out of that sum, and now it was the party. Reference to her "dot" was always one of Maria's last shafts. I, however, put an abrupt end to the conversation by getting up from the breakfast-table and going down to the office of the principal paper I was "on."

Reader, you must know that my name is Wilfred Penfield, and that I am a literary man; writing, criticising, and reviewing bring me in some four hundred pounds a year. I have a private annual income of two hundred and fifty pounds; Maria brought me one thousand pounds in Consols, and has further presented me with six children; she has, however, an uncle unmarried, who is a publisher, and a great publisher too—no other than Mr. Shortman, of Shortman, Crookley, Macwilliam & Co. We have expectations from him. My little house is No. 24, Dash Street, Pimlico. Even Maria does not dare call it South Belgravia, it is so centrally Pimlico. But the air is fresh, and the rent as suitable as any rent can be to my small means. We have therefore passed ten years at No. 24, and, please God, may live another ten in the same little nutshell. Witness, I am not ambitious; I am catlike; I get attached to my quarters; I like to know where to lay my hand on everything I want; hence my horror at the notion of a rout.

CHAPTER II.

The title of this little tale suffices to show how true is the more recent rendering of a well-known French proverb, namely, "L'homme propose, et la femme dispose." For the next few days I held out bravely against Maria's "martyred look;" she was scrupulously attentive to me, but she never smiled; she alluded sometimes to friends of hers who were, at any rate, allowed to do as they liked with their own money. Once she threatened not to call any more on anybody. She eat and drank little, cried over the children, and behaved generally like a captive princess. I met on one or two occasions intimate friends of hers leaving the house; they all looked at me as much as to say: "You brute!" I felt I was being morally "boycotted" into acquiescence. Princess Maria would admit of no compromise, the party must be in our house or nowhere, and so it happened that one evening, when I came home later than was my wont, in the best of good humours, although a little ashamed to face the Princess, I thought I would complete what had been a most cheery evening by a domestic surrender. I therefore said, on entering our bed-chamber, where I found her royal highness wide awake, wearing her well-known expression of calm resignation: "Maria, you may give your party your own way, and pray let's get it over." The effect was magical. I was soothed to sleep without a word of reproach, although I blush

to say it was 4 a.m., and I had a horrid notion that I'd left my great-coat and umbrella in the cab. Maria awoke radiant. I was saluted on both cheeks and assured that "I should just see what could be done." I had almost forgotten giving in, and regretted it much, but putting the best face I could on the matter, I asked what was the earliest date this infernal party could be fixed for. Maria thought a fortnight's notice de rigueur. Great heavens! three weeks' discomfort! "Well," I said, "please send out your invitations to-day for to-day fortnight; I will be out and away as much as I can during the preparations."

I had, in fact, a great mass of work on hand. It so happened just then that a certain Crown Prince had been behaving in a very marked way in his country; his conduct was freely discussed by the press, and generally condemned. The proprietors and editor of the principal paper for which I was head-writer took a different view. I, who was allowed great liberty of opinion by them, still more strongly appreciated the course adopted by H.R.H. I therefore wrote a leader highly commending the Crown Prince, clearly showing what immense good would come by his fearless conduct in future years, and praising him most highly for his independent and conscientious behaviour. Not content with this alone, I wrote several articles in the same strain, signed "Wilfred Penfield," which found their way into different publications. I constituted myself champion extraordinary to the Prince, and never did I take more pains with any of my writing. The subject pleased me none the less for finding myself at first almost alone in my opinions. I, however, was much gratified by overhearing my compositions loudly discussed in railway-carriages and other places of public resort. In time I gained many recruits, and although I had never seen the Prince, or knew anything of him personally, I took up his cudgels in the literary world most heartily, not a little to the astonishment of my friends, who had known me as a Radical and a Bohemian, with no great respect or love for rank and title. This I left to Maria.

This controversy was but an item in my work. Night and day I was at it. Many new but not original plays were being produced which it was my duty to criticise. Amongst endless other work, I had books to review and reviews to attend. Thus the fortnight slipped quickly away, and very little did I see of my upturned home.

"Wilfred, my dear," said my wife, catching me on the stairs, "to-morrow, you know, is the night of our party; I hope you've got a dress-suit that does not reek of tobacco-smoke. Come up and look at my dress and Harriette's, because I promised the child she might sit up; they are on my bed. All the other chicks sleep at Aunt Fanny's; isn't that kind of dear Fanny? Your papers and rubbish have been moved into the lumber-room; and the man's coming with the temporary staircase and tent early to-morrow morning; they are all ready to put up. I'm going to have pink glaze and muslin everywhere; that and lots of light will make the house lovely. Refreshments and waiters come from Stodge's. Old Booseycott is to be here at nine o'clock; so you see I've not been idle. Such success with the invitations!" rattled on Maria. "The Fullyjames' come; and Lady F., too, asks to bring Lady Eva Prendergast, who, she says, is so fond of clever society. Uncle Shortman comes, and has sent such fruit and flowers! The Potts', of course. Mrs. Colonel Splothering had a fit yesterday, so she can't come; but the Colonel promises me one or two military men. I hope, dear, your stars are all safe. I've held out the American poet, the Great Desert explorer, and the Black Missionary as inducements to everybody. I've secured a female doctor. And then, of course, we know so many great actors and authors that some are sure to come. Now, dear, do come and see the dresses; I can't be kept talking here all day."

Maria took me by the coat and bore me off to the bedroom.

"Lovely!" I said; "but isn't all that thick satin and lace very expensive?"

"Oh, you see, Miss Sleek recommended it so much, I determined to have it, and pay out of my own money."

"Ah!" I remarked, and fled.

Next day, hammering and scrubbing and shouting had begun long before I left in the early dawn. Not an article of furniture was allowed to remain in its accustomed place, doors and windows were being bodily removed. I shut my eyes and ran down the street.

"Wilfred, mind you're home in good time to dress. I expect people to arrive at half-past nine. There's no dinner to-night," shouted Maria after me.

CHAPTER III.

I WAS detained on business till nine o'clock that night, and had to rush home as fast as a hansom could bring me. I found Maria and Harriette dressed and smiling at themselves in the glass; bouquets had been provided out of Maria's own money. The house was a blaze of light. Pink glaze and muslin met the eye on all sides; a buffet was arranged along the little dining-room, covered with refreshments of all colours; mixtures in bottles there were also of all colours. I glanced into my sanctum—pink glaze and muslin! on the leads—pink glaze and muslin!

"Now come, Wilfred, make haste and dress; I've put a 'button-hole' on the dressing-table for you. You're to dress in cook's room," says my wife. "Everything has gone beautifully up to the present. Booseycott is here; I've got a special bottle of sherry for him—poor Booseycott! Don't the leads look charming! and the temporary staircase is a great success. How do you think Harriette and I look?"

"Quite too consummate," said I, flying up the stairs. As I dressed I reflected on my little part in the arrangements. I had settled at 12.30, when I hoped most of my guests would have gone, to give a little wholesome hot supper to a chosen few who should be asked privately to stay. Of this, of course, Maria was cognisant, but what she was not cognisant of was that I had asked old Blossom and old Shagg (generally called "B. and S.," as they were always together, "getting mixed"), habitués of the "Tumbler Topers," to look in late. They were both very well-informed men, and often most useful to me. Although the best of friends, they were never known to be civil to each other; their quaint sarcasms were always pointed the one against the other. I discovered they had dress-suits of an ancient date, and as they hinted they should like to know me en famille as well as en garçon, in a weak moment I asked them to our party, never venturing to tell Maria. I was down just as the first knock was heard.

"Such fine stately waiters Stodge has sent," whispered Maria; "and there's a linkman and a policeman to keep the line."

"Mrs. and Miss Fitzwalliham Spots," shouted one of the stately waiters.

"Oh, how-de-do, dear Mrs. Potts? So kind of you to come early,

and dear Annabelle too. Lady Fullyjames will be here, so at last you will meet."

Then ensued an awful twenty minutes of no arrivals, a forced conversation being kept up the while by poor Maria, to whom the time seemed treble its length. At last another knock.

"I daresay the Fullyjames' and Lady Eva," said my wife.

"Mr. Blossom and Mr. Shagg," said the Stately.

I could have sunk into the ground. Maria looked enquiringly at me.

"Oh, I forgot, my dear; two old friends of mine, distinguished men, joint authors of 'Snubs for Snobs' and other works."

To see those two old fellows come in! They both looked as if they had borrowed suits from Nathan that had been intended as evening attire for low comedians; large stick-up collars, open in front and behind, with strings depending; huge neckcloths; seedy and roomy black cotton gloves; boots very easy and slit about over the toes. Blossom, his face bright red, and his few grey hairs straight on end, brought up a bad hat and a thick stick. Shagg, whose purple nose and cheeks were traced with dark veins like rivers on a map, had a large handkerchief with flags of all nations in his hand. Blossom smelt of brandy-and-water, Shagg of smoke. Mrs. Potts put up her glasses, Maria scowled, Miss Potts and Harriette giggled (which Blossom noticed, as I heard him say, "Hate girls").

"Mr. Blossom, Mrs. Penfield; Mr. Shagg, Mrs. Penfield; my daughter, Mr. Blossom, Mr. Shagg," said I as easily as I could.

"How-de-do, ma'am?" said Blossom. "We call your husband 'our lad,' we do. Proud to meet his lady."

"I never called Penfield 'my lad,'" muttered Shagg; "I always call him 'my boy.' You're not even truthful, Blossom. Truthful or not, you're no fit company for ladies; grumbling and growling behind the bars at the Zoological is your fittest place. Don't you know better than to split hairs and argue in female society? Tax what you call your brains to say a chivalrous thing to the womenkind.—Honoured to make the acquaintance of Mrs. and Miss Penfield, I'm sure," said Shagg, with a bow which split something with a loud report. "Honoured to make all ladies' acquaintance, but especially 'my boy's' wife and daughter, as I call him. I'm an old fellow now, but time was when I was difficult to cut out, ma'am."

"His clothes never fitted him, ma'am," said Blossom.

Maria gave a stiff bow and looked daggers at me.

The two old fellows here began to shuffle round the room, mumbling to each other. Mrs. Potts smiled superciliously.

"I suppose they must be very clever," she said; "it is quite an experience for us to see what extraordinary people really do exist."

A ring at the bell—a note. Poor Maria, I saw her grow pale! It was from Lady Fullyjames, and ran as follows:

"My dear Mrs. Penfield,

"We are all so disappointed, but Sir James has just heard of the death of old Lady Bilk, his great aunt. As she was always so very kind to our dear second boy, we do not like to go out the very night we hear the news. I send a footman with this line, feeling sure you would like me to write. With many regrets, I am, my dear Mrs. Penfield, most sincerely yours,

"Eliza Fullyjames.

"P.S.—Poor Lady Eva is dying to go to you, but she has no one now to take her."

"Ah," said Mrs. Potts, "it's all very fine, but I never thought they'd come. To-morrow is the great reception at Awberry House for that eccentric Crown Prince of ——. I'll wager they go there. What a fuss they are making about that young man," she continued. "I should very much like to see him myself. We may be asked yet, through the Croaker Toadies, you know. No; Lady Fullyjames knows better than to tire herself to-night."

"I'm sure I don't care whether they come or not," said I, nettled. "We have a very agreeable circle of literary and artistic friends"—here Mrs. Potts glanced at "B. and S.," who were dozing on a settee—"they will, no doubt, be with us soon, and help us to a cheery evening. What the special attraction of the Fullyjames' is, I never could discover; we have nothing to gain from a Privy Councillor and Under Secretary. As for Lady Fullyjames posing for being clever as a blue-stocking, it irritates me much, say what I might."

Maria was upset, she began to think her party a failure, and she writhed under Mrs. Potts' ill-concealed smile of satisfaction. Soon a sprinkling of our friends and relations arrived, but, alas! no Uncle Shortman, no Black Missionary or American poet; the Desert explorer came fuddled, having evidently made up for lost time; no female doctor; only the usual ordinary entourage we lived amongst daily, and whom there was, to my thinking, no special

cause to entertain at such inconvenience. Booseycott, when sent for, had finished his bottle of sherry, and was so hot you could hardly touch him; he was far past playing, though he already threatened to sue me for his two guineas unless paid instantly. Stodge's stately waiters had followed his example: their leader I found, when arming Mrs. Potts to the refreshment-room, seated on the stairs crying bitterly. I asked him what was the matter, and he told me he remembered but only too late how badly he had behaved to his mother, when the temporary stairs gave way with a crash under the weight of Blossom and Shagg, who luckily were not hurt; the candles all guttered, covering my friends with grease; the pink glaze and muslin in the passage caught fire, which was subdued with the greatest difficulty, the destruction of the house being at one time imminent. A strong smell of onions crept up from the kitchen on to the leads, and thence pervaded every room. In fact, Mrs. Potts and her daughter said "Good-night," thoroughly convinced of our defeat.

"Wilfred," said poor dear Maria, almost in tears, "what at failure! I wish I had been guided by you, and given no party at all. I really can't go on smiling; that nasty old Blotting, or whatever his name is, has spilled a whole cup of coffee all over my dress, and quite ruined it. It's past twelve, so I and Harriette will slip off to bed; the poor child is peevish and over-tired. What useless expense!—oh dear, oh dear!"

I had just returned from seeing Booseycott and all the stately waiters off the premises in cabs, under charge of the police, at the risk of alarming the entire neighbourhood.

"Yes, my dear, I'm afraid we can't boast much," I replied absently, for I now was conscious of the presence of two smart-looking young men I did not know. The face of one of them seemed, nevertheless, familiar to me; although, for the life of me, I could not recollect when or where I had seen it.

"Do you think those are some of Colonel Splothering's military men?" I asked Maria.

"I'm sure I don't know," was her answer. "I daresay they are swell-mobsmen. To make the thing quite complete, we ought to have our few little bits of silver stolen."

As I walked towards my new friends, one of them came forward and met me.

"Have I the honour to speak with the master of the house?" he said with a slight accent.

"I am Mr. Penfield, and this is my house," said I.

"Then pray accept our apologies. My friend and I were to join a supper in this part." (Ah yes, I remembered; Madame de Rocàpic, in the next street, had an orgie.) "Seeing the lights, we mistook the house. Permit us to retire with many excuses. No doubt the coachman will find the other house."

The young man, whose face I fancied I had seen before, now joined his friend:

"Did Mr.—— say Penfield was his name?"

"I did."

"Mr. Penfield, who writes for the ———?"

"The same."

A whispered controversy now took place between the two. At length the one who had first addressed me said:

"Mr. ——, my master, His Royal Highness the Crown Prince of ——, is very pleased that this accident should have brought him to your house. Your admirable articles have been recopied in our country, and have done great service. Permit that I present you to his highness."

The Prince, whose face I now well remembered to have seen in the illustrated papers, as well as in the windows of many shops, side by side with the long list of P. Bs., was most affable and kind. I called back Maria, presented her, and saw her revive under the influence of his smiles and civilities. I heard the silly dear murmur a regret that the Potts' had gone. Emboldened by his great courtesy, I asked him if he would stop and honour our little supper. He at once acceded, making it a sine quâ non that my wife should not retire. Maria blushed, and looked brighter and prettier than I had seen her look for years, as she took the great man's arm, and down we all went. I got out some very good dry champagne I kept for any special occasion. Hot grilled chicken and Irish stew, cold lamb, salad, dressed lobsters, followed by cold tarts and cake, completed our little feast, to which about twelve sat down.

The ice was soon broken. The Prince was immensely amused at Blossom and Shagg, who had a sharp battle with their tongues. My other friends, including a well-known comedian, an equally well-known theatrical manager, two or three brothers of the pen, and a great caricaturist, soon warmed up. Thus, by the time I had opened a box of my best cigars, and Maria, wreathed in smiles,

"Maria blushed, and looked brighter and prettier than I had seen her look for years, as she took the great man's arm, and down we all went."—OUR PARTY.

had said "Good-night," merry quips, jokes, and stories of the best were flying from mouth to mouth. The Prince heartily joined in the fun, himself telling us some very amusing anecdotes. Madame De Rocàpic and her improper entourage were soon forgotten, and it was after three when H.R.H. wished me "Good-night," inviting me to a late breakfast at Claridge's on the following Saturday.

Next day little paragraphs appeared (with which I had, honestly, nothing to do), informing the world that Mrs. Penfield's evening party had been honoured by the presence of H.R.H. the Crown Prince of ——, attended by Count Sondonwick.

Maria was in the seventh heaven of delight. Uncle Shortman called in the morning with an opera box-ticket. He was in the best of humours; he expressed great regret at being prevented attending our party, and as much as told Maria, on going away, that she was his heiress. Mrs. Potts came in, boiling over with jealousy and disappointment. "Well, my dear," said naughty little Maria, "I didn't like to say he was coming, as we were not sure about it." (So we were not, in all conscience.)

Next drive up Lady Fullyjames and Lady Eva. Lady Fullyjames has a card for us to go that night to Awberry House.

"The Duchess wants to know you, dear, and your clever husband" (one for me). "I'd no idea the Crown Prince was to be at your party, or we might have strained a point and come out," says vulgar Lady F. "We hear old Lady Bilk has left all her money to a Home for Blind Dogs. I really wouldn't have stayed in for the stupid old woman if I'd known it before."

"You see," again says Maria Saphira, "we couldn't put 'To meet the Prince' on our cards, as we felt uncertain of his coming. But he is, of course, under great obligations to Wilfred, so I always thought he would come."

And thus we went to Awberry House that night, and the Potts' did not; Maria scored in every way, but I am afraid fresh expense on her own private purse was incurred. On Saturday I breakfasted at Claridge's. The Prince and I had a most interesting conversation which ended in my seeing my way, with his assistance, to an increase of income. He presented me with a handsome pearl pin, and specially sent his photograph, signed "Yours sincerely, Gustaf," to Maria.

Thus was "our party" retrieved at the last moment from dismal failure, and turned into success.

THE ART OF ACTING.

By DUTTON COOK.

ROBERT LLOYD, addressing his poem, "The Actor," to his friend, Bonnel Thornton, refers to the difficulty of teaching the player's art. Certain general principles might be stated, but the best method of applying these could only be left to the theatrical aspirant to discover for himself. He is fortunate if he is possessed of genius, but, denied that advantage, he must do as well as he can without it.

> Acting, dear Thornton, its perfection draws
> From no observance of mechanic laws:
> No settled maxims of a favourite stage,
> No rules delivered down from age to age,
> Let players nicely mark them as they will,
> Can e'er entail hereditary skill.
> * * * * *
> Perfection's top with weary toil and pain,
> 'Tis Genius only that can hope to gain.
> The Player's profession (though I hate the phrase,
> 'Tis so *mechanic* in these modern days)
> Lies not in trick or attitude, or start,
> Nature's true knowledge is the only art.
> The strong-felt passion bolts into his face;
> The mind untouched, what is it but grimace?
> To this one standard make your just appeal,
> Here lies the golden secret: LEARN TO FEEL.
> Or fool, or monarch, happy or distrest,
> No actor pleases that is not *possessed.*

There have not been wanting, however, authorities who have dealt less loftily and more precisely with the subject, and have even professed to teach histrionic art in easy lessons, promising to perfect the pupil within a brief period. Early in the century was published a work specially designed to serve "candidates for the sock and buskin," and lengthily entitled: "The Thespian Preceptor; or a Full Display of the Scenic Art, including Ample and Easy Instructions for Treading the Stage, Using Proper Action, Modulating the Voice and Expressing the several Dramatic Passions; Illustrated by Examples from our most approved Ancient and Modern Dramatists, and calculated not only for the Improvement of all Lovers of the Stage, Actors, and

Actresses, but likewise of Public Orators, Readers, and Visitors of the Theatres Royal." To this luxuriant description of his book the author or compiler added an admission that "the art of acting is not so easy as it is often imagined to be by young persons who are in the habit of visiting theatres or reading plays, and who become enamoured with certain characters, 'particularly in tragedy, which is the most difficult,' and who, self-deceived, flatter themselves they are competent to represent them upon the stage." Still, while holding "the essentials of an actor and actress to be great and numerous," the Thespian Preceptor humbly solicits all candidates for dramatic fame to attend to his instructions, protesting that these, combined with study and practice, may render his readers acquisitions to the stage or dissuade them from vain and vexatious attempts.

Lloyd had written:

> The player's province they but vainly try
> Who want these powers—Deportment, Voice, and Eye.

The Theatrical Preceptor, however, maintains that "an appropriate education" is the first essential of the histrionic aspirant. "Every gentleman should be a classical scholar; every lady should be mistress of her own and of the French language." A good education will give the candidate judgment, and enable him to avoid false accents and mispronunciations, and to discover new beauties in the text he delivers, fresh means of impressing the audience. "An actor of judgment," says our Preceptor, "will also beware of impropriety." If the scene represents a room he will appear uncovered; if he is supposed to be out of doors he will not keep his hat under his arm; he will not wear powdered hair when personating an antique Roman; he will not, after he has read a letter, throw it carelessly down or let it fall upon the stage, unless his author's stage-directions so require.

The next requisites, particularly for tragic and genteel characters, are personal advantages, elegant address, and harmoniousness of voice. The player, whose stature is short, is informed that he cannot successfully represent the serious heroes of the stage, though he may appear with credit in low comedy. Harsh monotonous sounds destroy the effect of every speech. Some respectable performers may have prospered by means of attention and industry in spite of grave vocal deficiencies, but as

a rule a powerful articulate voice is absolutely necessary to success upon the stage. "Can you shout?" a country manager is said to have enquired once of a youthful aspirant to histrionic honours. "I rather flatter myself I can," was the reply. "Then," enjoined the manager, "learn to shout in the right place and you'll do." And no doubt a measure of success has always attended the efforts of the vociferous. In the theatre sound and fury, even when they signify nothing or very little, the o'erdoing of Termagant, the out-Heroding of Herod, the tearing a passion to tatters to very rags, mouthing, ranting, splitting the ears of the groundlings, have always had charms for many, have rarely gone wholly unrewarded with applause. Still, given a capacity for shouting, the "right places" have to be discovered. After all, the actor is not required merely to exert his lungs; he must also exercise his judgment. On this head Lloyd lays down certain elocutionary laws:

'Tis not enough the voice be sound and clear,
'Tis modulation that must charm the ear.
* * * * *
The voice all modes of passion can express
That marks the proper word with proper stress,
But none emphatic can that actor call
Who lays an equal emphasis on all.
Some o'er the tongue the laboured measures roll
Slow and deliberate as the parting toll,
Point every stop, mark every pause so long,
Their words like stage processions stalk along.
All affectation but creates disgust,
And e'en in speaking we may seem too just.
* * * * *
In vain for them the pleasing measure flows,
Whose recitation runs it all to prose;
Repeating what the poet sets not down,
The verb disjoining from its friendly noun,
While pause, and break, and repetition join
To make a discord in each tuneful line.
Some placid natures fill the allotted scene;
With lifeless drone, insipid and serene;
While others thunder every couplet o'er
And almost crack your ears with rant and roar.
More nature oft and finest strokes are shown
In the low whisper than tempestuous tone.
And Hamlet's hollow voice and fixed amaze
More powerful terror to the mind conveys,
Than he, who swollen with big impetuous rage
Bullies the bulky phantom off the stage. Etc., etc.

In like manner our Thespian Preceptor dwells upon the

management of the voice. Much depends upon the player's setting out in a proper key and at a due pitch of loudness. The speaker is bidden to grow warm by degrees, "as the chariot-wheel by its continued motion." A cold declamatory delivery is reprehended. The force, or pathos, with which a speech is delivered should increase gradually, the loudest note being reserved for the climax. In his essay upon the art of acting, Aaron Hill specially recommends the players as the surest means of strengthening their elocutionary powers, "to warm, dephlegm, and clarify the thorax and the windpipe by exerting, the more frequently the better, their fullest power of utterance; thereby to open and remove all hesitation, roughness, or obstruction, and to tune their voices by effect of such continual exercise, into habitual mellowness, ease of compass and inflexion; just for the same reason why an active body is more strong and healthy than a sedentary one."

Action our Preceptor describes as "another grand essential," adding truly enough that "without action no actor or actress can be said to act." Action is composed of "standing, walking, running, attitude, and gesture," and to accomplish these properly, the use and management of the eye, the arm, the hand, the knee, the legs and feet, and the becoming carriage of the body, have to be understood. Tragic action is explained to be daring, energetic, and impetuous to excess. Actors with few exceptions are said to be contented with the wretched and ignorant persuasion that a long stride, a uniform swing of the arm, and a monstrous, clamorous bellow are of the grand requisites of a tragedian. It is pointed out that at times an unimpassioned deportment is required of the player. In replying to some necessary question of the play it is as ridiculous to swing the arms majestically as to keep both hands in the pockets. The performer is cautioned against certain ill-habits and errors of bearing and gesture. Some actors are accused of raising first the right hand and then the left with a puppet-like regularity of action. Some cannot speak without clenching their fists, or placing their arms akimbo, mistaking for an attitude of grandeur the certain sign of vulgar and inflated imbecility; others while speaking persist in shaking a single finger, some two fingers, some the whole hand, and cannot be persuaded to dispense with this tiresome accompaniment to their elocution. The art of walking the stage has to be acquired. Long

strides and short steps are declared to be equally objectionable while the pace of measured affectation, the march of opera-dancers, is said to destroy reality and to invite ridicule. Country actors are charged with a wearisome and absurd habit of first stepping forward and then stepping back, and of continuing the mechanical and monotonous exercise throughout an entire scene. London players are counselled to reform this altogether. Another habitual error is also denounced. The performer is told to turn his full face to the audience, while his eye, nevertheless, preserves a complete unconsciousness of their presence. "There can scarcely be an occasion," says the Preceptor, "when an actor ought to speak with his profile, much less with half his back turned to the audience; for then not only his voice but his features are without effect." Even when the nature of the scene needs that the player should look directly at the person to whom he is speaking, he is still advised to keep a three-quarter face to the audience.

Other portions of the Preceptor's discourse are of an obvious sort. He who would personate a hero is told that his carriage must be dignified, his manners graceful, his air gentlemanly and yet "disdainful of the gentility and mere ceremony of good-breeding—immeasurably beyond them." His tones must be varied, while his intelligence, fortitude, and presence of mind must be supreme. The lover should be endowed with all the external charms which are wont to attract and enslave female affection. "A smiling, prepossessing, yet anxious face, beauty of form, elegance of manners, sweetness of voice, passionate eyes, and susceptibility of heart." Clowns are to wear a rustic aspect, to be vacant of expression, with open mouth, raised shoulders, turned-in toes, and a shambling gait, to be slow of conception and utterance, and to be uncouth of manner. Hoydens are to romp and chatter, to over-dress, to be extravagant of action, and to comport themselves with an ill-bred air of excessive self-satisfaction. Chambermaids are to be pert and voluble, inquisitive and self-important. The fine lady should not suffer the least vulgarity to appear in her walk, attitudes, dress, or speech. Dress is of so much consequence to her that the moment she appears her character should be evident because of the taste of her attire, her elegant simplicity, and exquisite choice of ornaments. To perfect graces of deportment and charm of manner, smooth enunciation and flattery but not officious attention to all about her, she is required to add "a continual playfulness, a visible

coquetry which though perfectly at her command should appear spontaneous, and an ample mixture of delightful caprice." As to the personation of a gentleman upon the scene, it is said that the requisites for this achievement are many, and the difficulties in the way of it great. "There have been almost as few gentlemen on the stage as heroes," says the Preceptor. Good breeding, so disciplined as to be never off its guard, or, except upon the most extraordinary occasions, betrayed into the discovery of passion; bland gaiety of heart that no trifles can disturb, special charms of address and demeanour, manners that conciliate and gain universal esteem — these are the leading characteristics of the gentlemen of the drama.

Aaron Hill, labouring to reduce the art of acting to as simple a system as possible, maintains that there are but ten dramatic passions—that is, passions that can be distinguished by their outward marks in action: Joy, Grief, Fear, Anger, Pity, Scorn, Hatred, Jealousy, Wonder, and Love. It is the player's task to represent these passions in turn. But he must understand that he cannot duly imitate any passion "until his fancy has conceived so strong an image or idea of it, as to move the same impressive springs within his mind which form that passion when it is undesigned and natural." This Hill avers to be absolutely necessary, the first dramatic principle and the only general rule, the truthful foundation of it "being evident beyond dispute upon examining its effects in the following deduction from their causes." First, the imagination must conceive a strong idea of the passion. Secondly, that idea cannot strongly be conceived without impressing its own form upon the muscles of the face. Thirdly, the look cannot be muscularly stamped upon the face without communicating instantly the same impression to the muscles of the body. Fourthly, the muscles of the body, braced or slack, as the idea is an active or a passive one, must in their natural and not to be avoided consequence, by impelling or retarding the flow of the animal spirits, transmit their own conceived sensation to the sound of the voice and to the disposition of the gesture. Perhaps all this was clearer to Mr. Hill than it will be found by modern readers. But he strongly advises the players to hold up the mirror not simply to Nature but also to themselves. He who would portray Joy, for instance, is bidden to examine both his face and air in a long upright looking-glass, and until he has done that, he is not to

imagine that the impression has been "rightly hit," for in his glass only will he meet with a sure and sincere test of his having "strongly enough or too slackly adapted his fancy to the purpose before him." If his reflection shows a brow bent or clouded, a neck bowed and relaxed, his breast not gracefully thrown back and elate, his arms swinging languidly, "his back-bone reposed or unstraightened, and the joints of his hip, knee, and ancle not strongly braced by the swelling out of the sinews to their full extent," then, by these signs, he shall know himself, and he may be satisfied that he "has too faintly conceived the impression." Should further proof be necessary he has only to speak, raising his voice as high as he pleases, and he will find that in his languid muscular condition he can produce no joyous tones, although the sense of the words he utters may be "all rapture;" in spite of the utmost strain upon his lungs the resulting sounds will be "too sullen or too mournful, and carry none of the music of sprightliness." But "if success has attended his efforts, he will have the pleasure of observing in the glass that "his forehead is open and raised, his eye smiling and sparkling, his neck stretched and erect, though without stiffness, as if it would add new height to his stature; his breast will be inflated, his back-bone erect, and all the joints of his arm, wrist, fingers, hip, knee, and ancle will be high, strong, and braced boldly." And now if he attempts to speak he is assured that all the spirit of the passion of joy will ascend in his accents, and "the very tone of his voice will seem to out-rapture the meaning" of his speech. The thoughtful actor is enjoined, however, always to remember that he is never to begin to utter even so much as a single word, "till he has first reflected on and felt the idea" of the passion he would depict, and then adapted his look and his nerves to express it. But so soon as this sensation has strongly and fully possessed his fancy, then—and never a moment before—he may attempt to speak. "He will then always hit the right and touching sensibility of tone and move his audience impressively," whereas should he with an unfeeling volubility of cadence hurry on from one over-leaped distinction to another, without due adaption of his look and muscles to the meaning proper to the passion, "he will never speak to hearts, nor move himself, nor any of his audience, beyond the simple and unanimating verbal sense, without the spirit of the writer."

For the further assistance of the actor, Hill ventures upon definitions of the ten dramatic passions: Joy is Pride possessed of

Triumph; Grief is Disappointment void of Hope; Fear is Grief discerning and avoiding Danger; Anger is Pride provoked beyond Regard of Caution; Pity is Active Grief for another's Affliction; Scorn is Negligent Anger; Hatred is restrained yet lasting Anger; Jealousy is doubtful Anger struggling against Faith and Pity; Wonder is inquisitive Fear, its first degree is Amazement, its second Astonishment; Love is Desire kept temperate by Reverence. The actor who would portray Love elegantly is exhorted to express Joy combined with Fear. Love is further explained to be a conscious and triumphant swell of Hope intimidated by respectful apprehension of offending where we long to seem agreeable: the exhalation of a soft desire, which, to the warmth inspired by wishes, joins the modesty of a submissive doubtfulness. Indeed, it is protested that Love includes occasionally all other passions, while the Lover comprehends all serious dramatic characters that an actor can expect to shine by. "Let us cease, then, to wonder," adds Hill, "that we can so seldom see it touched upon in the Theatres."

Our Thespian Preceptor also enumerates the chief dramatic passions, and adds an account of "Humorous Sentiments and Intentions," with full description of the best means of portraying these. Joy is to be expressed by clapping the hands, by exulting looks—the eyes wide open and upraised, the countenance smiling, "not composedly, but with features aggravated," the voice rising from time to time to the very highest notes in the scale. The Preceptor is altogether more practical and prosaic than Mr. Hill. Grief is represented by beating the head, tearing the hair, catching the breath, and choking; also by screaming, weeping, stamping, hurrying hither and thither, and lifting the eyes to heaven. "This passion," says the Preceptor frankly, "admits of a good deal of stage trick; but stage trick, if not well contrived and equally as well executed, frequently fails of the desired effect." Fear opens wide the eyes and mouth, contracts the brows, draws back the elbows, lifts up the hands, the palms open towards the dreaded object as shields opposed to it. The body shrinks and trembles, yet assumes a fighting posture; the heart beats violently, the breath is quick and short, and the voice weak and agitated. Anger expresses itself with "rapidity, interruption, rant, harshness, and trepidation." The neck is outstretched, the head nods and shakes in a menacing manner, the eyes alternately stare and roll, the brows frown, the forehead is wrinkled, the nostrils are dilated,

every muscle is strained. Clenched fists are shaken, the whole body is violently agitated, the open mouth is drawn on each side towards the ear, the teeth gnash, and the feet stamp. Pity, a combination of love and grief, lifts its hands and looks down upon the object of compassion with lowered brows, parted lips, and features drawn together; the voice is frequently interrupted with sighs, and the hand is occasionally employed in wiping the eyes. The actor is warned, however, against over-display of his pocket-handkerchief in the manner of the actresses. Weeping, he is reminded, is effeminate, and may be derogatory to the character he represents. It is admitted, however, that in certain cases even heroes may weep, and weep with honour. Hatred, of which scorn is a sort of small and mild edition, shrinks back in avoidance of an odious object; the hands are outspread as though to keep it off, the eyes look angrily and asquint, the upper lip curled, the teeth set, the voice loud, the tone chiding, unequal, surly, vehement. Jealousy is restless, peevish, anxious, absent, absorbed. Now it gives way to piteous weeping and complaining; now a gleam of hope that all is well lights up the countenance into a momentary smile. Then gloom clouds the face again, and the mind is overcast with frightful suspicions, horrible imaginings. The arms are folded, the fists clenched, the rolling eyes dart fury. Violent agitations succeed. The actor may even be required to throw himself upon the ground, previously raising both hands clasped together to denote anguish. This action, the Preceptor observes, will also save him from hurting himself; but he is advised to study falling as being indispensable to theatrical exhibitions. He must fall flat, either on his face or on his side, with his face to the audience; "for it would be ridiculous to see a man who is supposed to be tormented with grief and fury *quietly lie down.*" Wonder opens the eyes, the mouth, the hands; the body is fixed in a contracted stooping posture; the face has the look of fear, but without its wildness; "if the hands hold anything at the time of the appearance of the object of marvel, they immediately let it drop unconscious." Love lights up the face with smiles, smoothes and enlarges the forehead, parts the lips, arches the eyebrows. The expression is eager and wishful, but with an air of satisfaction and repose; the eyes languish half-closed; the tone of voice is persuasive, flattering, pathetic, soft, winning, musical, rapturous. The body bends forward; sometimes both the hands are pressed

to the bosom. In all suppliant passions, the actor is reminded, kneeling is often necessary; it is sufficient, however, to bend one knee in cases of love, desire, etc., and the bended knee is never to be the knee that is next to the audience!

Corresponding instructions are furnished for the stage portrayal of Approbation, Exhortation, Enquiry, Modesty, Shame, Submission, Pride, Obstinacy, Command, Prohibition, Affirmation, Denial, Concession, Dismissal, Reproof, Condemnation, Menace, Curiosity, Complaint, etc. The actor is taught that Mirth opens wide the mouth, crisps the nose, half closes the eyes, sometimes filling them with tears, shakes and convulses the whole frame, "and, appearing to give some pain, occasions holding the sides;" that the face of Folly wears an habitual thoughtless grin, or stares wildly with much vacuity of countenance; that Madness rolls the eyes, distorts the features, rushes in and out furiously at every entrance and exit, "and appears all agitation;" that Sloth yawns, dozes, snores, and drawls; that Fatigue exhibits a dejected countenance, with listless limbs, a bowed-down body, and a weakened voice; that Dotage shows itself in the hollowness of its eyes and cheeks, its dimness of sight, deafness, tremulousness of voice, its weak hams, tottering knees, paralytic hands or head, hollow coughing, frequent expectoration, breathless wheezing, occasional groaning, and the stooping of the body under an insupportable load of years. Further, the symptoms of Sickness and Intoxication are fully set forth. The actress is told how to faint, to affect a seemingly sudden deprivation of all the senses, and to fall apparently lifeless into the arms of some one who, the Preceptor notes, "must be prepared to catch her;" and the actor is informed how to simulate death with the aid of violent distortion, groaning, gasping for breath, stretching the body, raising it, and then letting it fall. "Dying in a chair," says the Preceptor, "as often practised in some characters, is very unnatural, and has little or no effect." Clearly the Preceptor has a preference for "violent ends"—so far as the stage is concerned.

For the further edification of the student the Preceptor adds a variety of speeches and selections typical of the several dramatic passions in tragedy or serious drama, and especially recommends that these lessons from the most approved authors should be used in schools and apportioned to the pupils, and that at least one day in the week should be appropriated to the practice of oratory.

Thus he would illustrate Joy by a speech from Otway's "Orphan;" Fear, Agitation, and Terror by passages from "The Castle Spectre" of "Monk" Lewis; Pride and Wonder mixed with Pity by a scene from "The Iron Chest" of Colman; Parental Love by selections from "John Bull"—and so on. In conclusion, advice is given on the delivery of Soliloquies, Addresses, Prologues, and Epilogues, when the actor directs his discourse to the audience in general, or to boxes, pit, and galleries severally and particularly. The chief requisites for prologue-speaking are defined to be distinct articulation, easy action, and a modest demeanour. A retentive memory is insisted upon as absolutely necessary to render the delivery graceful and to give the lines their due point. And the speaker is advised to learn his speech thoroughly, and not to trust too much to the prompter or to any "mean subterfuge," such as finding his cue from a paper concealed in his hat, etc. The actor is reminded that upon these occasions, as a rule, he appears in his own character, though sometimes upon "the whim of the poet" he may be required to represent a sailor, a countryman, a lawyer, a Quaker, etc., and to assume the aspect, dress, and manners of such characters. Still he must address himself directly to the audience. In serious recitations the speaker is advised that he must be grave both of costume and air, and he is reminded that "the late Mr. Palmer"—the original Joseph Surface—when he delivered Gray's Elegy from the stage was wont to be "discovered, in a suit of black, meditating in a churchyard."

There have been later "Guides to the Stage" and "Handbooks of Acting," but on the whole, perhaps, the instructions of the "Thespian Preceptor" have not been much bettered if counsel of a more minute and technical character has been now and then tendered the incipient player. One authority, for instance, lays stress upon the arts to be employed in "making up" the countenance for theatrical purposes. The importance of rouge is set forth, with the manner of applying it by means of a hare's foot. It should not be too manifest, yet "it should be placed well under the eyes, to impart to them a brilliant sparkling appearance." Pearl-powder is also recommended to whiten the forehead, neck, arms, and hands. The facetious uses of rouge are also dwelt upon. "If a comic face be wanted, the rouge should be placed on the tip of the nose or down it in a streak, also laid

on the cheekbones or across the forehead. This, however, must not be overdone." There must be reason even in rouging. The actor is then advised that when he would remove paint from his cuticle, he should not attempt to wash it off, but should simply smear cold cream over his face; afterwards with a dry towel he will be able to wipe off cold cream and colour both. He is then told how to impart to youth the aspect of age, with the help of sepia or Indian-ink and a camel's-hair brush. The lines running down the nose, the furrows across the forehead, the crow's-feet about the eyes, and the lines round the mouth and chin, are to be deepened and defined by the paint-brush. White and sepia are to be employed when a sick or emaciated appearance is thought necessary, and when a "bald wig" is assumed the better to portray age, care is to be taken to colour the natural skin of the forehead to match the hue of the artificial skin or canvas scalp of the wig. But it would be, perhaps, easy to over-estimate the worth of suggestions and admonitions of this kind, which certainly may be thought to descend too much to trivialities and minutiæ.

The furious Tybalt was accused of fighting "by the book of arithmetic." However, he succeeded in worsting Mercutio, although he subsequently fell a victim to the superior fencing of Romeo, when that enraged youth flung away "respective levity," and ruled his conduct only by "fire-eyed fury." But can the actor's art be learnt from books? Can it be taught at all? Are such works as the Thespian Preceptor of much service to the aspirant? Something, no doubt, he may gather from Conservatoires and from Colleges of Dramatic Art; yet, after all, his success must depend as much upon what he takes with him to school as upon what he there acquires. The actor's best instructors are his own observation, individual study, industry, and practice. Lloyd writes:

> As who in earnest studies o'er his part
> Will find true nature cling about his heart,
> The modes of grief are not included all
> In the white handkerchief and mournful drawl;
> A single look more marks the internal woe,
> Than all the windings of the lengthened Oh!
> Up to the face the quick sensation flies,
> And darts its meaning from the speaking eyes:
> Love, Transport, Madness, Anger, Scorn, Despair,
> And all the passions, all the soul is there.

In conclusion, he descants eloquently upon the evanescent nature of the player's triumphs :

> Yet, hapless Artist ! though thy skill can raise
> The bursting peal of universal praise,
> Though at thy back Applause delighted stands,
> And lifts, Briareus-like, her hundred hands :
> Know, Fame awards thee but a partial breath,
> Not all thy talents brave the stroke of death.
> Poets to ages yet unborn appeal,
> And latest times the Eternal Nature feel.
> Though blended here the praise of bard and player,
> While more than half becomes the Actor's share,
> Relentless Death untwists the mingled fame,
> And sinks the Player in the Poet's name.
> The pliant muscles of the various face,
> The mien that gave each sentence strength and grace,
> The tuneful voice, the eye that spoke the mind,
> Are gone, nor leave a single trace behind.

DE PROFUNDIS.

HEART of my love, beat true !
Sad is my life, and cold the autumn night,
The wind in gusts shakes down the yellowing leaves ;
The sky is grey, only a fitful light
Shows where the moon will rise ; the chill sad time
Strikes to my very soul. Passèd are tears,
Petulant longing, even radiant hope
That lived so long, gone too ; only, last thing that dies,
Only a resting of my weary heart on you
Who never yet have failed—oh, love, be true !

Eyes of my love, shine clear !
The mists are rising round me dense and cold
As where the river whispers to the reeds ;
Hopeless, I strive to pierce the thick night's fold
Where here a flickering ray, and there, misleads—
Only a lifting of sad eyes to you
Who ever have the light—oh, love, be true !

A. L. L.

THE FOYER OF THE GYMNASE.

THERE are occasions in life—and this is one of them—when a conscientious chronicler feels it incumbent on him to anticipate the perspicacity of his readers by candidly confessing to them any particular delinquency of which he may have been guilty, especially when, as in the present case, they are tolerably sure to find it out themselves. Wherefore, without further preamble, I may as well state at once that the heading of this paper is to a certain extent a delusion and a snare; and that beyond one visit to the foyer of the ex-Théâtre de Madame, I know no more about it than the most unsophisticated Philistine that ever trod the Boulevard. How I came to be admitted into its strictly-guarded precincts is soon told. Having already succeeded on some plea or other in exploring more or less frequently the majority of these Thespian sanctuaries, I enquired one day of my old acquaintance, Rose Chéri, who had recently exchanged her pretty name for that of the manager Montigny, if I might be allowed to see the foyer.

"Vous n'y pensez pas," she replied with a smile. "Qu'en dirait M. Monval?" (He was then the régisseur, and the most incorruptible Cerberus in Paris or elsewhere.)

"Au contraire," I persisted, "j'y pense, et beaucoup. As for M. Monval, he can refuse you nothing."

"Well," she said, "perhaps it may be managed; but mind, only for once. Come to the stage-door to-morrow after rehearsal, and ask for me."

As this occurred exactly five-and-thirty years ago, I may be excused if my recollections of the mysterious chamber in question are somewhat hazy; the only thing I distinctly remember being an armchair covered with some green material, which M. Henry Buguet, in his amusing series, "Foyers et Coulisses," alludes to as follows: "When a new piece is read, M. Montigny seats himself in the traditional armchair; if he laughs, M. Derval (Monval's successor) laughs, and all the artists laugh; if, on the contrary, he weeps, M. Derval weeps, and all the artists weep."

Having thus made a clean breast of it, I may venture to add that although in this instance I cannot boast of having been "nourri dans le sérail," I was, nevertheless, personally acquainted with many

of its celebrities, and never grew weary of admiring that marvellous perfection of all-round acting, the recognised speciality of the Gymnase company, which, during a long series of years, no other theatre—not even the Comédie Française—can truly be said to have surpassed.

I arrived in Paris just in time to witness the last struggles of M. Montigny's predecessor, M. Delestre Poirson, against the Dramatic Authors' Society, and his fruitless efforts to defy the hostility of that all-powerful body. How the quarrel arose between them I do not remember, but its result was the withdrawal of every piece which had hitherto assured the prosperity of the theatre, and the consequent appeal by the luckless manager to young and untried playwrights, among whom he vainly hoped to discover a Scribe, or at the very least a Bayard or Mélesville. One of these was Jules de Prémaray, then at the commencement of his literary career; and if the receipts had been on a par with his claims on them, his position would have been sufficiently enviable—two or three of his productions figuring nightly in the bills. But the impassioned energy of Léontine Volnys, and the matchless versatility of Bouffé—never more conscientiously displayed than at this desperate crisis—failed to attract, and at length, in June, 1844, after several months of unavailing heroism, M. Poirson finally abdicated, and M. Lemoine-Montigny reigned in his stead.

New brooms, it is generally understood, sweep clean, and the in-coming manager very soon put the theory into practice by weeding out from his company the scratch contingent of incapables engaged at low salaries by his predecessor, and gradually replacing them by artists of unquestionable ability. Bouffé had already signed a contract with the Variétés, and Madame Volnys was shortly about to create "La Femme de Quarante Ans" at the Comédie Française; but Numa, Klein, Ferville, Tisserant, Landrol, Mdlle. Eugénie Sauvage, and Madame Lambquin—all of whom had at one period or another been members of the Gymnase—were at once re-engaged, and to these were added Bressant, who had just returned from Russia, and Mdlle. Nathalie. With such an "ensemble" the campaign opened brilliantly; the recalcitrant authors, whose "droits" had been lying dormant for the last year or two, triumphantly resumed their wonted place in the bills, and contributed so abundant a supply of novelties that M. Montigny had only to pick and choose among them. Ferville, who had

played so many generals in Scribe's pieces that even in private life he almost fancied himself entitled to wear a red ribbon in his button-hole, and who, in addition to his professional emoluments, derived a capital income from the dramatic agency of which he was the head, shared with his tall, thin, spider-legged comrade, Klein, the Napoleonic privileges of the "Old Guard," called the stage-manager (under his breath) "pékin," and invariably spoke of every young aspirant to theatrical honours as a more or less promising "conscript." It was a treat to see Klein, when summoned before the curtain on the first night of a new piece for the purpose of announcing the author's name; his bow to the audience had all the solemnity of the ancient régime, combined with a grotesque self-importance peculiarly his own; and in his delivery of the stock phrase, "que nous avons eu l'honneur de representer devant vous," the profound conviction with which he emphasised the word "honneur" must have amazingly flattered the titis in the gallery. He detested the Republic as cordially as did his ex-comrade and my old friend Perlet; both of them, indeed, would in this respect have stood high in favour with the great lexicographer, for, where "Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality" were concerned, they were certainly "good haters."

Apropos of Perlet, it is fortunate for French actors nowadays that the right formerly possessed and insisted upon by the Comédie Française, of arbitrarily annexing to its company any performer of another theatre, no longer exists; or we should have seen Rose Chéri condemned, much against her will, to play Célimène and Mdlle. de Belle-Isle, and Geoffroy charging his rebellious memory with the entire repertory of Samson. Perlet's case was exceptionally hard; on his flatly refusing to abandon the line of characters to which he owed his popularity, and accept the position offered him by the "Maison de Molière," his engagement at the Gymnase was summarily quashed, and it was signified to him that he must either give up his profession altogether, or submit to the terms of the decree then in force, forbidding him henceforth to exercise it within a certain distance of the capital. He chose the latter alternative, and until his final retirement from the stage consoled himself as best he might with the applause of provincial admirers; but his career was virtually ruined.

I always considered Bressant more in his element at the Gymnase than at the Théâtre Français, where with few exceptions

the parts assigned him, if not absolutely antagonistic to the nature of his talent, were by no means calculated to display it to its full advantage. Excellent in "Le Barbier de Séville," "Le Jeune Mari," and other lighter pieces of the repertory, he was less at home as Bolingbroke in the "Verre d'Eau" and "Don Juan," while his Tartuffe and Alceste were downright failures. The transition from the "jeune premier" to the "premier rôle" demands qualities which were physically denied him; with all his winning elegance, his graceful fascination of tone and manner, his sentiment was forced, and the true ring of passion absolutely wanting. On the Boulevard Bonne Nouvelle none of these deficiencies were observable; "Horace et Caroline," "Un Fils de Famille," and "Le Piano de Berthe" exactly suited the measure of his ability; and even Lovelace in an ingenious adaptation of Richardson's masterpiece, although verging in parts too closely on the dramatic to be quite within his grasp, deservedly ranked among his most brilliant creations.

He was, however, exceptionally fortunate in sharing the responsibility of this "succès de mouchoir," as Clairville, one of the authors, complacently styled it, with that exquisitely sympathetic actress Rose Chéri, whose Clarisse has been truly described by Dickens in a letter to Lady Blessington as "a most charming, intelligent, modest, effective piece of acting, with a death superior to anything I ever saw on the stage, except Macready's Lear." It was a lucky day for the Gymnase when this admirable artist first timidly presented herself as a candidate for one of the vacant places in the company, and was allowed—not without misgiving—by M. Poirson (for we are speaking of 1842) to essay her powers in a "lever de rideau," neither the one nor the other imagining that she was fit for anything better. She had no other recommendation in her favour beyond a prepossessing exterior, and whatever professional experience she had acquired in the smaller provincial theatres, where indeed her life from her earliest infancy had been passed. Anyone curious enough to examine the "Almanach des Spectacles" for 1828 may ascertain that in that year of grace the company of the theatre of Bourges was entirely composed of the members of two families, namely, Garcin and Cizos, the latter being the patronymic of our heroine; her father, Chéri-Cizos, was the bass-singer of the troupe, her mother the prompter, while she herself and a juvenile Garcin

alternately performed the children's parts. From Bourges the little community migrated successively to Chartres, Nevers, and lastly to Périgueux, where Rose Chéri, who had by this time dropped the unpoetical name of Cizos, and developed into a very agreeable representative of the "ingénues" and "jeunes premières," was advised to try her fortune in Paris, and applied for an engagement to M. Poirson, with what result has been already told. M. Montigny, on his accession to power, had the good sense to discern the capabilities of the young actress, and gradually brought her into notice; so that, before another twelvemonth had elapsed, "la rose chérie du Gymnase" had become a celebrity, and the leading dramatists of the capital were at her feet. Those alone who have seen her in such totally distinct and opposite creations as "Le Demi-monde," "Un Changement de Main," "Le Mariage de Victorine," "La Crise," and "Les Pattes de Mouche" can have any idea of the extraordinary flexibility of her talent, instinctively adapting itself to every shade of character, without ever ceasing to be natural, and above all essentially feminine. One of her peculiar attractions was a voice "soft, gentle, and low—an excellent thing in woman"—the tone of which was so melodiously penetrating that its charm was irresistible and I have heard old play-goers say that even Mdlle. Mars in "Valerie" had never affected them so deeply as the last scene of "Clarisse Harlowe."

Her sister Anna, a year younger than the more gifted Rose, was a good-humoured buxom lassie, aspiring to nothing beyond a second-rate position in the company, and filling it to the best of her ability, which is all that can conscientiously be said of her. She subsequently married Lesueur, the original Poirier in Augier's comedy, and the very quaint representative of Taupin in "Diane de Lys." I often met him in the studio of Eustache Lorsay, one of the cleverest and most incorrigibly "Bohemian" artists of his day. He occupied a dilapidated third-floor in the Rue de Lancry, where of an afternoon actors of every degree were wont to congregate and consult him respecting details of dress and general "make-up;" not unfrequently making a practical use of his atelier by converting it into a temporary dressing-room, and rehearsing the effect of their forthcoming "types" in full theatrical costume. Meanwhile, Lorsay—a short black pipe in his mouth—was diligently at work, either tracing on a block of wood an illustration of Béranger, or

putting the finishing touch to a water-coloured portrait of Bressant as Lovelace, or (as the case might be), of Paulin Ménier as Choppard in "Le Courrier de Lyon," both of which, by the way, figured in a sale of dramatic portraits at the Hôtel Drouot in 1853.

The public of the Gymnase, when I first began to frequent that theatre, was decidedly conservative in its tastes, retaining a traditional veneration for Scribe, and only accepting under protest the introduction into the repertory of productions by authors suspected of a leaning to a more modern school. The old habitués, who had occupied the same stalls from time immemorial, and for whom the rising of the curtain was generally the prelude to a comfortable nap, objected on principle to anything provocative of uproarious merriment; so that when Achard, fresh from the Palais Royal, with his exuberant spirits and loud joviality, was tempted by the offer of a thousand a year to indulge for their benefit in the quips and cranks which had been the delight of M. Dormeuil's patrons, their indignation knew no bounds.

"Why do you dislike him?" I enquired of one of these ancient fossils during a performance of that screaming farce, "La Vie en Partie Double."

"Parbleu," growled the malcontent, "il y a de quoi. Il m'empêche de dormir."

The worst of it was that when Achard, disgusted with his inhospitable reception, cancelled his engagement, bright little Désirée followed suit, and deserted us also. How M. Montigny could have let her go was to me an inscrutable mystery, for a more deliciously piquante actress has seldom graced his or any other boards. Her style, from all accounts, must have been something like that of Jenny Vertpré—bewitching in its archness and naïveté, and set off by a charmingly intelligent countenance, and the trimmest, daintiest figure imaginable. One trifling drawback might, perhaps—had it been generally known, which it luckily wasn't—have damped the enthusiasm of that section of her admirers imbued with the idea that a pretty face must necessarily be associated with a pretty name; for in that terribly outspoken publication—the annual report of the society of dramatic artists—we find her unfeelingly described as—Pochonet!

Another even more serious blow to the prosperity of the theatre was the departure of Dupuis, whose inimitable Olivier de Jalin in

the "Demi-monde" and his famous "pêches à quinze sous" had procured him an engagement at St. Petersburg, from whence he only returned a year or two ago, rich in roubles, and, if possible, a better comedian than before. That delightful "ingénue," Mdlle. Delaporte, also tempted by the bridge of gold laid down for her by the astute General Guédéonoff, may, for all I know to the contrary, have made her fortune there, but unquestionably at the expense of her good looks; for when, some years later, she reappeared in "Les Curieuses," she was hardly recognisable.

Lafontaine, in accordance with his usual migratory habits, made but a short stay at the Gymnase, where he notably distinguished himself as the Colonel in "Un Fils de Famille." He had a servant, or rather factotum, named Adolphe, a species of modern Frontin, sharp as a needle and "cool as a cucumber." This worthy, among other privileges, enjoyed that of opening his master's letters; and on being reproached by a friend of the actor for his indiscretion in breaking the seal of a delicately-perfumed note, the superscription of which was evidently penned by a feminine hand, replied with an ineffably complacent air: "Monsieur has no time to trouble himself about such trifles; je les prends pour mon compte!"

Little by little, most of the old actors had been replaced by new recruits, more or less advantageously. Berton, who, until people grew accustomed to his somewhat abrupt manner, had proved an unsatisfactory substitute for Bressant, eventually worked his way into favour; Geoffroy from Rouen at once made his mark in "Mercadet;" and Aimée Desclée, who had previously been dismissed on account of supposed incompetency, returned to win all hearts by her incomparable "Frou-Frou." Landrol the elder, the "rose-bud" Marthe, and the joyous Amédine Luther were dead; the lustrous-eyed Mdlle. Melcy had retired into private life; and Tisserant had long since earned golden opinions at the Odéon in Ponsard's "Honneur et Argent." But by way of compensation young Landrol, after a long and hopeless apprenticeship in lovers' parts, which he played as awkwardly as Julien Deschamps did well, conceived the bright idea of utilising his comic powers, and turned out a far cleverer actor than his father; Ravel contributed his mercurial gaiety to the general stock; and Pradeau, the original creator (with Berthelier) of Offenbach's "Deux Avengles" in the little Thespian band-box of the Champs Elysées now known as the

Folies Marigny, with his broad comic face and meridional accent soon became as great a favourite as when displaying his antics in "Tromb-Alcazar" at the Bouffes Parisiens.

Nor were the fair sex inefficiently represented; Blanche Pierson, then just beginning to convince the public that a pretty woman may also be an excellent actress, Fromentin, Angelo, and Céline Montaland, presented a quartette of grace and beauty difficult to match, and stimulated, much to his own renown and profit, the inventive faculties of the ingenious M. Worth. As regards the last-named damsel, it was not easy to recognise in her shapely figure and flashing eyes the infant heroine of "La Fille Bien Gardée" at the Palais Royal, where poor Grassot, who hated the task as cordially as Mr. Folair did when playing second-fiddle to Miss Ninetta Crummles, was condemned to exhibit himself in a part ill-suited to him; and it seemed ages ago since, in return for the bonbons I always had in my pocket for her, she presented me with a pencil sketch drawn and signed by herself, which she would doubtless be surprised to hear that I possess to this day.

At the commencement of M. Montigny's managerial career, the box-office was presided over by a very attractive young lady, who made no secret of her intention to exchange her position, when an opportunity offered, for the more congenial vocation of actress. A year or two later she kept her word, and I found her soon after working her way up the professional tree under the name of Mdlle. Virginie Duplessy at the Folies-Dramatiques, from whence she crossed the Boulevard to the Vaudeville, and created to Sardou's satisfaction Madame Vigneux in "Nos Intimes." Shortly before the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War I met her in the Rue Vivienne.

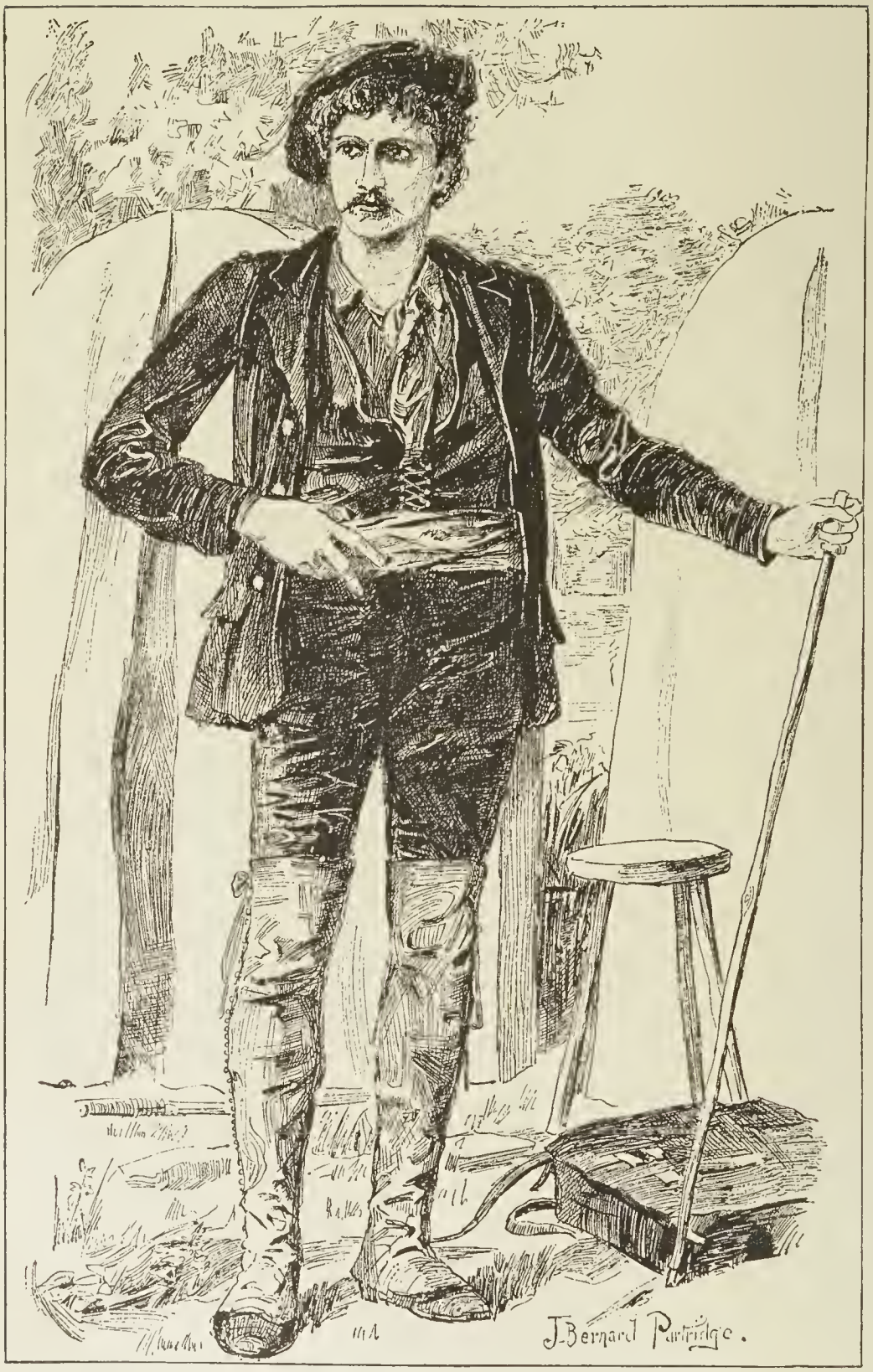
"I leave Paris to-night for Marseilles," she said; "a first-rate engagement, eighteen thousand francs and a benefit."

I congratulated her as a matter of course, and wished her every possible success.

"Yes," she continued, "I think the South will suit me. J'adore la bouillabaisse."

"Qu'elle vous soit légère!" I replied, and sincerely hope it was.

CHARLES HERVEY.



MR. WILSON BARRETT AS "THE ROMANY RYE."

WILSON BARRETT.*

By Austin Brereton.

HALIFAX is not a poetical town. No flight of fancy, however lofty, could make one think it an abode of romance. The tall chimneys, with their thick clouds of smoke, exercise a sort of wet blanket effect upon the imagination, and make one vote it a very dull, matter-of-fact town indeed. It is not a place where one could expect to find the eaglet ruffling its pinions for its first flight. Halifax has a theatre. In the year of grace 18— three local notabilities, named respectively Mutton, Rawlings, and Graydon, were the managers of this Yorkshire temple of Thespis. To them was sent by Mr. Danvers, a London theatrical agent, a youth of eighteen summers, to play such parts as might be assigned to him, varying from one line to a dozen, and termed in theatrical parlance "utility." His remuneration was to be twenty-one shillings per week. He was to find his own tights, boots, shoes, feathers, hats, laces, cuffs, swords, daggers, and all that miscellaneous lot of nondescript articles termed by an actor his "props." That young man's name was Wilson Barrett.

Brought up so strictly, amid the prejudices of orthodox faith, that he was seldom, if ever, permitted to enter the precincts of a theatre, young Barrett had from his early boyhood felt an irresistible longing for the stage. At eleven he knew every word of "Hamlet" and "Othello," and it naturally followed that when he took to the stage as a profession, he was a willing student and an earnest worker. He had his heart in his task, and so he soon ingratiated himself with his employers, rough, horny-handed Yorkshiremen, who believed in the principle of having a "fair

* The first portion of this article originally appeared in another publication, from which it is now re-written and corrected.—A. B.

day's labour, for a fair day's pay." One day the juvenile leading man of the company was found in that peculiar state which combines hilarity with incapacity. George Owen's Irish drama, "Thackeen Dhu," was to be performed next night, and Barrett was asked to undertake the rôle vacated by the incapable jeune premier. He sat up all night to write out the part from the manuscript, and was perfect at the rehearsal at ten o'clock next morning. This was the first stepping-stone in the young actor's career. He rose at once from the despised regions of general utility to the responsible, but in this case, not more lucrative, position of juvenile lead. After eleven weeks at Halifax, he went with George Owen's company to Leeds, and made his first appearance in that town at the Princess's Theatre, now the Princess's Concert Hall. From there he went to the Old Adelphi Theatre at Liverpool, to play Hardress Cregan in "The Colleen Bawn." Fortune had been kind to him; after being only three months on the stage, his salary had been increased from a guinea to five-and-twenty shillings per week. Blackpool was the next scene of the rising actor's exploits, and then came his first attempt in theatrical management. Having a little more money than the rest of the company, he proudly undertook the risk involved in theatrical speculation. A "fit-up" was obtained, scenery provided, properties made, and every requisite bought, and the company, with the young Bonaparte of the drama at their head, were to open their campaign in another rather unromantic town, Burnley, Lancashire. The trying day at length arrived. The evening of the fateful event came. The theatre was open, the actors and actresses were dressed for their parts, the manager, who had to appear a little later in the piece than his fellows, was standing in front waiting to see the crowd that would witness the performance. But the crowd did not come. The band made a fitful attempt to play, and stopped — but commenced again upon the manager's announcement that he thought he saw the crowd coming round the corner. But disappointment! The crowd — composed of three women and two boys—actually went past the theatre, without even stopping to look at the bills. Thus for about half an hour—until at last the hopes of the troupe seemed to be realised, in spite of bitter forebodings. There could be no mistake this time—somebody was paying at the box-office, the others would soon follow. The audience were coming at last. The audience came. He was

a very small boy, who, having paid sixpence, sat down in the centre of the pit and looked around uncomfortably. The band started again; so did the audience, who at once huddled himself up in a corner. That solitary boy did not increase that night, and I draw the veil of happy oblivion over his fate. I am told that he was seen at his work next day, not a bit the worse, but whether he witnessed a performance of the drama, or whether he was left in a dark recess of the theatre with no spectacle but the gaping proscenium, my deponent sayeth not.

From this the reader may safely infer that Barrett's first managerial speculation was not a brilliant success. He returned again to the path of a subordinate in the ranks of the drama, and we next find him playing the "heavies" at the Theatre Royal, Nottingham, under Mrs. Saville's direction. As an instance of what an actor was expected to learn and to know in those days, I give a list of the parts played by Wilson Barrett in one week: On Monday, Brabantio; on Tuesday, Coitiers in "Louis XI.;" on Wednesday, Stukely in "The Gamester," with "Pizarro" for an after-piece; on Thursday, Baradas in "Richelieu;" on Friday, Edmund in "King Lear," and the Father in "The Little Treasure;" and on Saturday, Francis in "The Robbers," and Major Galbraith in "Rob Roy." Every one of these parts had to be copied out, as at most only one or two books were given for the whole company to study from.

The season at Nottingham being over, Barrett went to play the same class of parts at Aberdeen, under the management of Mr. McNeill. It was there that he first met the lady who was to be his wife—Miss Heath, who came to fulfil a starring engagement in the capital of the Deeside. He was then playing such parts as Beauséant in "The Lady of Lyons;" Fouché, in "Plot and Passion," etc. He soon afterwards went on a very pleasant tour with Mr. McNeill, through the smaller Scotch towns, Elgin, Montrose, and others. He met Miss Heath again at Arbroath, and married her at Brechin six weeks afterwards. After a starring tour continued for some time, Mr. Barrett undertook his first London engagement at the Surrey Theatre, to play with Miss Heath in "East Lynne." Whilst that drama was being rehearsed, Charles Reade's "It's Never Too Late to Mend" was to be played. On the morning of the last rehearsal it was found that Mr. Richard Shepherd, who was to act Tom

Robertson, had lost his voice, and to prevent the theatre from being closed, which might have damaged the success of Miss Heath's engagement the following week, Mr. Barrett undertook to play the part of Tom Robertson at half a day's notice, which he did, making this his first appearance in London in Mr. Reade's play, instead of as Archibald Carlyle in "East Lynne." Then followed an engagement at Drury Lane, under the management of Mr. F. B. Chatterton, and after that he went into the provinces again, starting with his own company, one of the first permanent travelling companies in the kingdom. In 1874, Wilson Barrett became the lessee of the Amphitheatre, Leeds, which was burned down two years afterwards. In 1876, Mr. Barrett produced Mr. W. G. Wills's play, "Jane Shore," at the Princess's Theatre, under the management of Mr. F. B. Chatterton, and the magnificent success that was accorded to both Miss Heath's splendid impersonation of the heroine and to the piece itself is a well-remembered fact. "Jane Shore" was revived by Mr. Barrett at the Princess's Theatre, under the management of Mr. Walter Gooch, in the following year. In the autumn of 1877 Mr. Barrett became the lessee and manager of the Theatre Royal, Hull, which has since remained under his direction. On April 20th, 1878, he produced for the first time in the provinces, at the Theatre Royal, Brighton, Mr. F. C. Burnand's version of "Une Cause Célèbre," entitled "Proof, or a Celebrated Case." In the autumn of 1878 Mr. Barrett resumed the reins of management of the Grand Theatre, Leeds, universally acknowledged to be one of the most magnificent theatres in the world, and a temple of the drama which had been purposely built for Mr. Barrett by the magnates of Leeds. He made Leeds, one of the worst theatrical towns of the provinces, one of the best, by the simple force of strictly honourable and intellectual good management, coupled with a high ambition to attain the loftiest sphere of the drama, so that the Grand Theatre at Leeds came to be looked upon by Yorkshiremen almost as one of the national monuments of the county. The building was opened on November 18th, 1878, with a performance of "Much Ado About Nothing," with Mr. Barrett as Benedict.

Moving higher and higher in his aims, Mr. Barrett, in September, 1879, became the lessee and manager of the Royal Court Theatre, London, which he opened with Sutherland

Edwardes's version of Victorien Sardou's "Fernande" on the 20th of the same month, and in which he appeared as Pomerol, and made a distinct success. This he followed by another successful part, that of Mr. De Courcey in Mr. H. J. Byron's comedy, "Courtship;" having previously made a hit in Mr. H. A. Jones's charming comedietta, "A Clerical Error," in which he appeared as the Rev. Richard Capel. On December 15th of the same year, Messrs. Bronson Howard and James Albery's play, "The Old Love and the New," was produced by Mr. Barrett at the Court Theatre. He introduced the great Polish actress, Madame Modjeska, to a London audience on May 1st, 1880, in Mr. James Mortimer's version of Alexandre Dumas' play, "La Dame aux Camélias," entitled "Heartsease." This distinguished artist took the town by storm, and continued under Mr. Barrett's management, appearing in "Mary Stuart" on October 9th following, in "Adrienne Lecouvreur" on December 11th of the same year, as Juliet on March 26th last year, and as Juana in the play of that name by Mr. W. G. Wills on May 7th. In the revival of "Romeo and Juliet," Mr. Wilson Barrett undertook the rôle of Mercutio, and by his excellent interpretation of the character won the highest opinions. Of this impersonation "The Daily Telegraph" remarked that "there was another surprise, and a most welcome one, in the Mercutio of Mr. Wilson Barrett, a very original, highly intelligent, and effective performance. He was, indeed, a gentleman that loves to hear himself talk, and will speak more in a minute than he will stand to in a month, an embodiment of those natural gifts of charm of manner and sunny temperament which are summed up in our familiar phrase, 'a good fellow.' Mercutio, with all his babble and fun, his chatter and smile, his bravery and recklessness, was evidently a good fellow, and Mr. Wilson Barrett, by a very effective dash of manner, lightened up every scene in which Mercutio appeared. Nervousness may have given to the earlier scenes of Mercutio a little extra flurry, but nothing could spoil the effect of the death-scene, which, in its detail, its thought, and its thorough unconventionality, was a sincere contribution to art." His acting of the monk, Friar John, in "Juana," was also one of the best and most artistic performances that he has given us.

In the spring of last year Mr. Barrett undertook the management of the Princess's Theatre, which he opened on June 4th with

a version of "Frou-Frou," in which Madame Modjeska appeared as the heroine. On July 2nd he revived "The Old Love and the New," himself acting John Stratton, and on September 10th came the production of "The Lights o' London." In this play it will be remembered Mr. Barrett played Harold Armytage. He produced "The Romany Rye" at the same theatre on June 10th. In this drama he played the title-rôle.

Putting aside the question of Mr. Barrett's ability as an actor, his talents as a manager are considerable. Besides the Princess's Theatre, London, he controls the Grand Theatre, and the Assembly Rooms, Leeds, together with the Theatre Royal, Hull, and several of the best travelling companies.

TO ESTELLE.

(A RONDEL.)

I EVER loved you, Sweet, and yet
I deem you dearer than of yore;
I loved, but now I love you more
Than even when of old we met:
Fresh moments do fresh joys beget,
Each new hour brings of charms a store;
I ever loved you, Sweet, and yet
I deem you dearer than of yore.

So shall our hearts, all free from fret,
Grow richer in Dan Cupid's lore;
And bliss we never knew before
These words to melody shall set:
"I ever loved you, Sweet, and yet
I deem you dearer than of yore."

W. DAVENPORT ADAMS.

THE THEATRE. No 33. THIRD SERIES

"He looks upon me as a raw recruit."

Yours Sincerely

Bessy Grahame.

IN PERMANENT PHOTOGRAPHY BY THE LONDON STEREOSCOPIC COMPANY. 54, CHEAPSIDE.

MISS CISSY GRAHAME.

(See Photographic Frontispiece.)

MISS CISSY GRAHAME made her first appearance on the stage at the Theatre Royal, Hull, under Mr. Wilson Barrett's management, on December 26th, 1875. She was at this time only thirteen years old. She also played under the direction of Mr. Sefton Parry and Mr. J. B. Howard, and she supported Miss Heath in her provincial tours. On April 20th, 1878, in the first production of "Proof" at the Theatre Royal, Brighton, she was the original representative of Adrienne. Through the kindly recommendation of Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, Miss Grahame was engaged by Mr. Hare for the Court Theatre, and she made her first appearance in London there on January 4th, 1879, playing Lucy Franklin in "A Scrap of Paper." On the 15th of the next month she acted, at the same house, Léonie in "The Ladies' Battle," and on March 1st she played Florence Dalston in Mr. Val Princep's comedietta, "Cousin Dick." On August 28th, at the Prince's Theatre, Manchester, in the course of a tour with Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, she was the original Marguerite in the first performance of "Monsieur le Duc." In the autumn she acted the latter character at the St. James's Theatre, where, on March 13th, 1880, we find her appearing as Mrs. Mildmay in "Still Waters Run Deep." In August following she acted Louisa in "Orange Blossoms," at Liverpool, and supported Madame Modjeska at the Alexandra Theatre in that city, playing Nichette in "Heartsease," and the Duchess d'Allmont in "Adrienne Lecouvreur." On the 9th of the next month, at the Court Theatre, in the first performance of the Hon. Lewis Wingfield's play of "Mary Stuart," she acted Margaret Curl, and on November 1st she went to the Prince of Wales's Theatre to play Lise in the production of the English version of "Annie-Mie." At the latter theatre on February 2nd, 1881, she represented Nellie in the first performance of "The Colonel." On May 7th she returned to the Court Theatre for the part of Katrina in "Juana." She then went back to the Prince of Wales's, where she acted Nellie for a long period. It is

noticeable that in the performance of Mr. Burnand's play at Abergeldie, on October 4th, Miss Grahame acted the character of Olive. Her next part was that of Eva in the first performance of "Odette" at the Haymarket Theatre on April 25th. She is now in the country playing Bess in "The Lights o' London." She acted that character for the first time on August 14th, at the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh. "The Scotsman," in criticising this performance, remarked that "Miss Cissy Grahame showed herself gifted with considerable dramatic talent," and that she "imparted to the pathos of the part a genuine, natural ring."

EDGAR ALLAN POE.

THREE SONNETS BY E. F. PELLEW.

To friends above, from fiends below, the indignant ghost is riven—
From Hell unto a high estate far up within the Heaven—
From grief and groan to a golden throne beside the King of Heaven.

LENORE.

I.

HE toiled along a dark and weary way,
Scattering his roses o'er a thankless ground,
His genius shedding its pure light around,
His own lone path uncheered by flower or ray;
Remorseless Death, scorning his bitter grief,
Bereft him of the angel of his heart,
Leaving him robbed of his own better part,
His tender soul shattered beyond relief;
For though when dreaming of that silent shore,
That "kingdom by the sea" now fled from sight,
Or spirit led through Autumn woods by night,
He still could in immortal cadence soar;
She dwelt now in "her high-born kinsmen's" home,
And "Ulalume" was written on the tomb.

II.

When one whose being was our very life
Leaves us behind and floats beyond our reach,
While we lie stranded on the rocky beach,
Exposed to storms, and misery, and strife,

A memory yet steals over us at times,
Like the faint fragrance of a faded flower,
Recalling to us for one little hour
The voice that thrilled our ear with angel chimes;
But when the living snap the tender strings
Which bind to them a poor weak erring soul,
Lashed by hard destiny past all control,
A keener pang this cruel parting brings
Than Death, who leaves us still in realms above,
A spirit filled with pity and with love.

III.

His end was mystery; why should we raise
Or with rude hands asunder pluck the veil?
Nay, let it like a sable mantle trail
Shrouding his shadow from the vulgar gaze;
Who recks if fainting 'neath too sore a load,
His mind to fatal remedy was driven?
The godlike muse ere this his faults hath shriven,
And sped him free on the Elysian road.
Now sitting 'midst the fathers of his art,
Lulled by soft streams and shaded by fair palms,
Once more behold enfolded in his arms
The form no destiny from him can part;
False was the Raven! for the lost Lenore
In Aiden dwells with him—for evermore.

Our Musical-Box.

ALTHOUGH circumstances prevented me from attending any of the "Parsifal" performances at Bayreuth last month, I propose to tell the readers of THE THEATRE something about that work and its recent renderings. It will be my privilege, for once in a way, to address them, not in my own words, but in those of my gifted friend, Paul Lindau, from whose inimitable chronicle of the "Festal-Consecration-Stage-Play," I have selected a few paragraphs of general interest. Those who, like myself, revelled six years ago in his "Nuechterne Briefe aus Bayreuth"—which may be freely paraphrased, "Letters from Bayreuth, written on an empty stomach"—will rejoice to hear from him again upon the congenial subject of a Wagnerian novelty. Many others, who may never hitherto have heard of him (for few German lights of contemporary literature cast their rays as far as this "brumous isle"), will, I am sure, be delighted to make his acquaintance. For the information of these latter I may premise that Paul Lindau is not a specialist in musical criticism, but a feuilletonist of the first water. He is to Berlin what Albert Wolff is to Paris and Spitzer to Vienna. The idiosyncratic force and charm of his style cannot be conveyed in translation, which is a pity, for they have placed him at the head of all living German light essayists. Be it my task to reproduce the matter of his thought, if not the manner of his expression.

* * * * *

"He whose mission it is to report upon a new creation of Richard Wagner finds himself in much such a fix as that of Faust when the latter desires to render the first chapter of the Gospel of St. John into his beloved German: he gets stuck at the very first word. The foremost question: 'What sort of an impression did it make as a whole?' which his far-distant reader

has a right to put to him, cannot fail to perplex him inconveniently, and he will find, after pondering over it vainly for some time, that he can only answer it by the counter-question it naturally suggests: 'Impression upon whom?' Upon the unbiassed public? My goodness gracious! who is unbiassed hereabouts? And how on earth is it possible here to recognise what is the sentence of the majority, seeing that a blathering handkerchief-waving partisan makes more noise than a dozen quiet people who delight in art without grovelling in one-sided hero-worship, whose artistic faith does not prompt them to bow down before the idol of an inflexible Monotheism, and who esteem other musicians besides Richard Wagner — aye, even living ones, even Johannes Brahms! At Bayreuth, vehement rejoicings do not mean very much, and when people talk about 'an enthusiastic reception,' it is a mere meaningless façon de parler. It is a natural necessity that a new work by Richard Wagner, produced here in Bayreuth before the most faithful and energetic admirers of his genius, should be greeted with tempestuous acclamations. When Wagner lightens, it thunders in the Festal-playhouse! Under such circumstances, the best thing the reporter can do is simply to state what he himself has felt and thought, without making any pretension to pronounce a conclusive judgment. . . . ."

* * * * *

"In the first scene, a wood by a lake, we are introduced to good old Gurnemanz, who has never a Leitmotiv to his name. It seems possible, therefore, to get on in life and even to become tolerably advanced in years without a 'guiding phrase.' In the score of Parsifal, however (with this solitary exception), Wagner has faithfully adhered to his method of musical identification by means of special rhythmic and melodic signs and tokens (Leitmotive), a method timidly suggested in his earlier operas, and developed to its utmost availabilities in his later "Music-Dramas." Every one of his characters keeps a musical passport, so to speak, in the orchestra, with which voucher he or she may not part, under heavy penalties, and must invariably also produce when about to put in an appearance. These "guiding phrases" are of different sorts, not exclusively descriptive of the human being they announce, but of certain occurrences in that person's physical or psychical life as well. . . . ."

* * * * *

"A stormy passage in the orchestra signals to us the approach of an uncomfortable personage. It is Kundry—a wild terrible woman, the principle cause of all the calamities that have befallen the Brethren of the Grail, and who would fain help them out of their trouble, but that she is subject to the will of Klingsor, a wicked magician, the pious fraternity's inveterate foe. This Kundry is not always so ugly as she now looks; there are days when she is "in beauty," and it was upon one of these occasions that she foregathered with Amfortas, the Grail-King and keeper of the sacred chalice containing the Blood of Christ, as well as of the holy spear thrust into the Saviour's side by a Roman mercenary. Amfortas, it seems, could not withstand the charms of this seductive female, and vile Klingsor profited by the King's moment of weakness to snatch from him the wonder-working lance and with it to wound him. Since that mishap, affliction and want have prevailed in the Grail-Castle; for the King's hurt will not heal, and, so long as the relic shall remain in the heathen's possession, the Brethren will have to do without supernatural nourishment. Moreover, the arrogant Klingsor takes advantage of the Grail-Knights' embarrassment in an altogether inexcusable manner. In close contiguity to the Grail-estate he establishes a magnificent garden, which he peoples with extremely good-looking females of doubtful morality, for the sole purpose of diverting the Grail-Knights from the path of virtue. And it would really appear that a good many of the Brethren are so weak as to prefer the society of these highly-perfumed flower-girls to that of their incessantly sighing and groaning monarch. Not very nice of them, perhaps, but essentially human! Amfortas, whose acquaintance we make on his sick-bed, grunts and wails without intermission; and everybody knows that people who will talk of nothing but their ailments are not the most entertaining companions in the world. Now Amfortas has nought to say that does not refer to his wound or other physical infirmities; and we have scarcely met him for the first time when we begin to wish most earnestly for the fulfilment of the prophecy, to the effect that a 'pure fool' will turn up, capable of healing the King's wound. We hope this fool will come soon."

* * * * *

In due time Parsifal arrives, shoots a swan, and is lectured at some length for his wanton destructiveness by Gurnemanz, who,

moreover, volunteers to take him up to the Grail-Castle. This he does by a cycloramic road and to orchestral accompaniments of great beauty. Having reached the Burg, Parsifal witnesses a dismal ceremony performed there daily in connection with Amfortas' wound, fails to understand what it is all about, and is sent about his business by Gurnemanz, because he turns out an even greater fool than that gentleman expected, or, it may be said, hoped. This anti-climax is of Wagner's invention, and differs entirely from the Gralsburg incident as originally narrated in verse by Wolfram von Eschenbach.

* * * * *

"The second act," continues Lindau, "offers the strongest imaginable contrast to the first; indeed, it is a laborious combination of contrasts, as, for instance, hell-fire against holy-water, heathen enchantments against Christian miracles, unchained sensuality against ascetic continence. The assertion that, in 'Parsifal,' Wagner has fallen back upon his 'Lohengrin' method and manner, is as incorrect as can be. What resemblances exist between the two music-dramas are quite superficial. Both Parsifal and Lohengrin are 'Knights of the Swan;' and, perhaps, the very swan pierced by Parsifal's bolt is the sire or grandsire of the bird that tows Lohengrin across the Scheldt to extricate Elsa from her embarrassments. Lohengrin is Parsifal's son, so says the legend, and so he himself tells us at the most solemn and distressing moment of his life. But that the Wagnerian Parsifal is Lohengrin's father appears doubtful to me. He looks by no means the sort of person to give up the independence of bachelorhood for the restraints of matrimony. The mere fact that Wagner notifies the slaying of the swan in 'Parsifal' by the same chords with which he announces the advent of the swan in 'Lohengrin' is not at all significant of any community of character in the two plays. Like Figaro's song hummed by Leporello in the banquet-scene of 'Don Juan,' it is nothing more than a composer's self-quotation."

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"In the Zauberburg we become acquainted with Klingsor, respecting whom our curiosity has been greatly excited during the first act. He does not quite come up to our expectations. In fact, he is a magician of the common bad old sort. You can see at once by his red and black feathers what sort of a

bird he is. Long before we catch a glimpse of Parsifal, he has espied that hero in a magic-mirror, and lured him on with the intention of playing him a nasty trick. To this end he employs the means utilised by the Erl-King for a similar purpose—handsome girls are to disturb the inexperienced youth's moral equilibrium. For the success of his depravatory undertaking, Klingsor reckons, in particular, upon the most dangerous of his sirens, Kundry, whom he conjures up in order to impart his formal instructions to her—no longer the breathless Kundry, who gasped past us in the first act, that old, ugly, slovenly slut, with bristly elf-locks and a complexion à la Azucena; but a shadowy, phosphorescent apparition in blue glistening robes, so indistinctly seen that it may, without difficulty, be taken for a superhumanly lovely woman. . . . . As Parsifal has approached the magic castle, he has been encountered by several armed men, whose social position is not indicated in the libretto, but whom we may assume to be demoralised Grail-Knights, who prefer female society in an odorous garden to staying with Amfortas in his sick-room. Parsifal soon settles these eccentric persons, whereupon Klingsor and his tower sink into the earth, and the magic garden takes their place. From all quarters 'flower-maidens' rush in, crying and complaining of the rough handling their male friends have been subjected to by Parsifal, whom they abuse in uncommonly strong language for 'thrashing their playfellows.' 'Who,' they ask with diverting frankness, 'will play with us now?' In his quality of 'pure fool,' Parsifal accepts the word 'play' in its purely foolish signification, and answers quite innocently, 'That will I, and gladly!' The ladies, although they have been vituperating him up hill and down dale, no sooner hear that the good-looking young fellow is ready to 'play' with them than they begin to quarrel over his possession—which is just like the sex. Parsifal, however, resists all the temptations they subsequently offer him to 'play;' indeed, when they become rather pressing, he is extremely rude to them. Suddenly, and from behind a hedge, a voice exclaims, 'Parsifal.' It is that of Kundry, who reminds the damsels that their 'playfellows' are waiting to have their injuries attended to, and to be nursed. They take the hint and depart, leaving Kundry alone with Parsifal. Her love is of a far more calculating and insidious character than that of the simple-souled flower-girls. In order

to reach Parsifal's heart she selects the well-known roundabout road of consolation. She tells him, in moving accents, how his mother died, and when the poor lad sinks to her feet in an agony of grief, draws him gently towards her and gives him 'the first kiss of love as the last greeting of a mother's blessing.' Wagner's stage instructions prescribe 'a long kiss.' And a very long kiss it is! Whilst it is going on, Parsifal tastes the whole sweetness, and bitterness too, of sensuality. He experiences desire and pain simultaneously; scales fall from his eyes; all at once he knows what the wounded king, whose sufferings he had contemplated without appreciating them, must be going through; pity stirs in his breast, awakening his intelligence, and he shouts wildly, 'Amfortas! The wound, the wound! It burns within my heart!'"

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"Having attained the apogee of his dramatic action, Wagner weakens its effects by tedious prosiness. It is, I know, useless to complain of this, because he is immutably certain that whatever he does is right. He will go on in the old, old tiresome way, whatever one may say. Kundry and Parsifal, after they have settled the really important part of their business, persist in conversing exhaustively about this and that, like acquaintances who have risen from their seats to take leave of one another, hat in hand, but cannot find the door. Wagner's heroes always resemble parliamentary orators—once in possession of the House they never stop spouting until their whole stock of ideas is exhausted. Meanwhile, what are the others to do, who have to listen? Parsifal has no time to lose. He ought to hasten to the suffering monarch. He has found out what Pity means. He is the Chosen One. Nevertheless, his composer condemns him to play the part of a patient listener, in which rôle he is most assuredly not calculated to develope enthusiasm in the audience. However, he succeeds in withstanding Kundry. In vain Klingsor hurls the sacred spear at the Pure Fool; it hovers over his head; he catches it in the air, describes the sign of the Cross with its point, and Klingsor's magnificence collapses into dust and ashes, whereupon Parsifal goes off with the spear to look for the invalid King."

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"The third act of 'Parsifal' has given rise to desperate

conflicts of opinion. Some are enraptured with it, others are disgusted. 'A Revelation!' exclaim the former ecstatically; "A blasphemous parody," growl the latter . . . . Enter Gurnemanz, aged and decrepit, from a hut. He has heard a dismal groaning proceeding from a thicket hard by, and there, sure enough, he finds Kundry in a condition of death-like catalepsy. With great difficulty he succeeds in rousing this remarkable woman, who has lost all her demoniac beauty and is once more as revoltingly ugly as in the first act . . . . 'Who nears now the holy spring?' enquires Gurnemanz, looking out towards the woods. Gurnemanz does not know; but we do, on the spot. The orchestra lets us into the secret, by sounding Parsifal's Leitmotiv on a French horn; we thus become aware that Parsifal is due. The Leitmotiv system, therefore, obviously does not contribute to the heightening of dramatic interest; it makes the music rend asunder the veil of which the poem has not resolved to lift a corner."

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"Parsifal is no longer the hearty lad of the second act, but seems to be as dark, stern, hard, and uncomfortable as the black armour in which he is clad. Being informed by Gurnemanz that he is on holy ground, and that it is Good Friday, he puts off his harness, whereupon the old gentleman recognises him as the person he turned out of doors at the Grail-Castle many long years ago. Straightway he tells him (at great length) so gruesome a story of the privations endured by the fraternity since that time that Parsifal faints away. Then come *tableaux vivans* of events recorded in Sacred History. Kundry washes his feet, dries them with her hair, and anoints them; Gurnemanz sprinkles holy water on his head. Parsifal, now attired in a long white robe reaching to his ankles, and "made up" with luxuriant waving hair, parted in the middle, and a full fair beard, offers a faithful impersonation of the Redeemer, as usually represented to us by the pictorial art. Many people consider this presentment revolting. The modern stage is essentially profane, and now that plays have passed out of ecclesiastical hands into secular ones, offers a striking contrast to its mother the Church. Incidents and persons appertaining to the House of God should not be exhibited on the theatrical boards. Even the Berlin Chief of Police is of this opinion, for he has

lately prohibited the display of Biblical figures in the wax-work shows. . . . ."

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After graphically describing the closing scene of the opera in the Grail-Castle, where Parsifal heals Amfortas' wound with a touch of the sacred spear, Lindau passes in review the more striking characteristics of the "Stage-Consecrational-Festal-Play." I deeply regret that the space allotted to me in The Theatre will only allow me to reproduce a few of his pregnant remarks. "Hatred of melody," he writes, "has taken deeper root than ever in Wagner's nature. Compared with 'Parsifal' the 'Nibelungen' teemed with melodic phrases—passages which we might almost incline to designate as songs, ballads, airs. . . . . What Wagner's heroes have to sing in 'Parsifal' is the negation of whatever pleases the ear—of all that our convictions (grounded on the music of composers who produced a good many tolerable works before the time of the Bayreuth Prophet) have accustomed us to describe as sweet-sounding. In this respect Kundry and Amfortas are dreadful people. At every third bar of their parts one asks one's self: 'Can this really be so?' Yes, it is so; but one feels that it might just as well, or ill, be something else. What is wrong might often be right, because what is right so often sounds wrong . . . . . In minting dramatic coins out of epic metal, Wagner has changed the characters of Eschenbach's poem, greatly to their disadvantage—none more disagreeably than that of Parsifal himself, no longer the delightful simpleton sketched in Wolfram's verse, nor even the incorporation of juvenile heroic force, like Siegfried—who catches a bear before breakfast, and slays a dragon to give him an appetite for dinner. Parsifal makes his first appearance on the stage prepossessingly enough, and courts our acquaintance as a promising youth enough. He has just shot a swan which had not done him any harm; but that would hardly be regarded as a regrettable occurrence at a time when anybody could shoot without a license. Let us call it a piece of stupid boyish mischief, but for goodness sake, not a crime! When Parsifal allows himself to be moved to an agony of repentance by old Gurnemanz's long, tiresome preachment, our confidence in his liveliness of disposition sensibly diminishes. Thus a whimpering mammy-child would behave, not a tight lad just escaped from his mother's apron-strings in order to assuage his insatiable

thirst for action. Parsifal, however, adheres to this crushed and justly-bullied attitude until the end of the play. No bright, luminous, fiery spark, he, but a heap of grey, mourning ashes. Only once again and for a few moments, when he catches sight of the flower-girls, does he recover his youthful amiability. Subsequently he relapses into gruesome whining, and throughout the third act is a dull misanthropical zealot. Probably his external appearance contributes greatly to the depressing effect he exercises upon the audience—firstly, his black cap-à-pie armour, which imparts to him an undesirable resemblance to an iron stove, and, secondly, his Biblical get-up, intended to remind us of the sublime Nazarene's affecting figure."

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"Quite a surprising personage is Kundry, the Accursed, who laughs at the Crucified Lord, has seduced Amfortas, would like to do him a good turn later on, but does not dare because wicked Klingsor has her in his power. With this Messenger of the Grail Wagner has mixed up some elements of Herodias, the "Ever-Hideously-Laughing One." In her normal condition, Kundry can only give utterance to a fragmentary word or two, which she accompanies with ghastly groans and hideous cachinnations. Only in the second act is her tongue loosened, so that she may wheedle Parsival. In the third she is condemned to total silence. Kundry is eccentric—but more so in design than execution. At first she excites our interest—presently we find that we don't know what to make of her. The old Grail-King Titurel only lets us hear his voice once, in warning to his son, and then gets himself promptly buried. But I like this old fellow a vast deal better than I do Amfortas, who is never out of pain for a moment, and who wails, whines, and whimpers from his first bar to his last. One would like to shout at him: 'Do leave off expatiating upon your afflictions, and let us talk, just for a change, about something more entertaining than your honoured wound!' He is intended to suggest pity. I fail to rise to the naïveté of feeling that might enable me to regard this Royal groaner as a tragical personage. To me he appears an utter, inveterate bore. Wagner has really no luck with his kings. Perhaps he is too incurable a republican to succeed with them. Marke, Gunther, and Amfortas make up a Royal trio of truly sovereign tiresomeness. Klingsor, again, has been but scurvily treated by Wagner. As an individual

he is far too insignificant for the quantity of first-class conjuring he performs. One is justified in expecting more from a man capable of such magnificent hanky-panky as his landscape-garden trick."

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"Old Gurnemanz is the most human and bearable character of the lot—the only personage of the poem who has a sensible word to say for himself, the one healthy creature in the play. All the others are crippled or sickly, some through bodily, some through mental infirmities—Titurel through old age, Amfortas by his wounds, Kundry and Klingsor by magic spells, Parsifal by his inborn ineptitude. In this libretto Richard Wagner, the most German of German poets, congenially shakes hands with Victor Hugo, the Frenchest of Frenchmen. Hugo creates Han of Iceland, Quasimodo, Triboulet, Gwynstaine—monstrosities in caves and steeples—a hunchback in motley—an artificially produced caricature of humanity. Wagner peoples the world of his artistic fancy with unnaturally diminutive dwarfs, unnaturally colossal giants, magicians, and persons bewitched."

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"My opinions respecting the 'invisible orchestra' are unchanged. Its advantages are indisputable: it spreads a mysterious veil over the whole body of sound, hiding its angularities, toning its entirety down to a uniform subdued hue, poetically effective in the more solemn episodes, the proper nuance of which is twilight-grey. But, every now and then at least, there should be dawn in the orchestra! The sun should shine there bright and burning! This cannot be in the 'invisible orchestra,' which is quite forlorn of daylight and brilliancy. After its monotonous buzzing and humming, one longs for something startling—say, the blare of a trumpet, as you hear a trumpet sound when you can see it. The 'unseen' is too mellow, too conciliatory; it lacks harshness of expression at passionate moments; it never cries out aloud, but only moans. . . . . According to Uhland, the world waxes more beautiful from day to day; Wagner, however, in the latest of his published writings, pronounces it to have horribly deteriorated, and confesses that he would have no objection to see our whole contemptible vile culture trodden under foot and annihilated. Not unnaturally, when he opens his mouth, sensitive souls begin to feel rather uncomfortable; for nobody knows what may come next!"

Wm. Beatty-Kingston.

Our Play-Box.

"THE VICAR OF BRAY."

A New and Original Comic Opera in Two Acts. Written by SYDNEY GRUNDY, Composed by EDWARD SOLOMON.

Produced at the Globe Theatre on Saturday, July 22nd, 1882.

Rev. Wm. Barlow ...	MR. W. J. HILL.	Samuel Spicer...	MR. BEALE.
Rev. Hy. Sandford	MR. W. H. FISHER.	Dorothy	MISS LIZZIE BEAUMONT.
Thos. Merton, Esq....	MR. H. COOPER CLIFFE	Mrs. Martin ...	MISS M. DAVIS.
Mr. Bedford Rowe...	MR. W. S. PENLEY.	Nelly Bly... ...	MISS EMMA D'AUBAN.
John Dory	MR. R. R. MASON.	Agatha	MISS K. MORTIMER.
Peter Piper	MR. MORETON.	Cynthia	MISS MILNER.

MESSRS. SIDNEY GRUNDY and Edward Solomon's new comic opera, "The Vicar of Bray," can hardly be said to come up to expectation, or that it is likely to become very popular. The interest in it is very slight, and the music is commonplace and dull. The trick and mechanism of the whole thing is apparent, and the opera rather wearies by its tediousness than refreshes by its story and melody. The lyrics are neatly written and the orchestration is good. But beyond this little can be said in its favour. The plot is briefly this: The Rev. William Barlow, Vicar of Bray, has a spotless young curate, one Henry Sandford, bound to him for a number of years, and this young man is attached to the Vicar's daughter, Dorothy. To this attachment the Vicar objects, and to prevent Sandford from marrying Dorothy he turns from Low to High Church, well knowing that such a proceeding will ensure Sandford's absence, as he has strong and invincible ideas of his own on religious subjects, and objects to High Church people. Sandford goes abroad, and returns just in time to prevent the marriage of Dorothy to Thomas Merton, a sham sportsman, who visits his friends with a troupe of sham huntsmen at his heels. Merton prefers for his bride a Miss Nelly Bly, of the Theatre Royal, and he and Sandford arrange matters to their mutual satisfaction. The Vicar pairs off with a rich widow, and the opera is concluded. There is a pretty children's chorus in the first act, and a huntsman chorus possessing a quaint and not displeasing tune. But even this is overdone and spoilt by repetition. When Mr. Solomon gets hold of anything at all ear-catching he makes the mistake of wearying his listeners with it, and riding his horse to death. The cast is not strong.

Mr. W. J. Hill, droll and humorous as his acting may be, cannot sing at all, and fails lamentably in the attempt, and Miss Lizzie Beaumont does not possess a voice of sufficient power for the part of Dorothy. Mr. Walter Fisher shows a dry quaint humour as Sandford, and Mr. Cooper Cliffe infuses some life and spirit into the part of Merton. Mr. W. S. Penley plays a confidential solicitor in a distinctly humorous style, and Miss Maria Davis acts in a funny though somewhat exaggerated manner as the widow. As Nelly Bly, Miss Emma d'Auban dances gracefully, and introduces a ballet troupe, consisting for the most part of ladies who will not cause a sensation by reason of their beauty. The choruses and orchestra are efficient, but neither the scenery or the dresses are at all pretty. A. B.

"MERELY PLAYERS."

A Drama in One Act, by Edward Rose.

Produced at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, on Monday, July 24th, 1882.

Bertolde ... ... Mr. H. Beerbohm-Tree.	Peppe ... ... Mr. Rowland Buckstone.
Lelio ... ... Mr. Norman Forbes.	The Manager ... Mr. Laurence Grey.
Zanno ... ... Mr. Edward Rose.	Maddalena ... ... Miss Myra Holme.
Testa ... ... Mr. E. H. Bell.	Nina ... ... Miss Glover.

In the new one-act piece, "Merely Players," which was produced on the last night of the "little Prince of Wales's," Mr. Edward Rose has taken an incident from a French drama, and worked it into dramatic form. The author admits that the central situation in his play was suggested by that of a French drama, but he claims that "the piece is otherwise, in incident, characters, and dialogue, entirely original." The scene is laid at a village near Florence, and presents the interior of the booth of a company of strolling players. The head of the troupe has married a beautiful girl, who is loved by a nobleman who has joined the players for the purpose of eloping with the wife who has inspired his passion. A piece is performed in which a miser is informed by his servant that his wife has fled with her lover, and the messenger—who has reason to think that the player's wife has fled in reality — tells his news with such an appearance of truth that the actor is wrought with a double emotion. The lover returns to seek the player's wife, and a short but passionate scene occurs between the two men. This is stopped by the appearance of the repentant wife, and the audience declare that the play is superb. A great critic and linen-

draper, "who cuts up calico by day and plays by night" (?), thinks the piece highly entertaining, and "the manager from Florence" declares that the piece shall be acted in that city forthwith. Mr. Beerbohm-Tree represented the principal character—that of the husband—with considerable attention to artistic effect and detail, and Miss Myra Holme played the heroine. Both the artists, however, seem to have suffered from the effect of having played so long and continuously in Mr. Burnand's æsthetic satire. Mr. Norman Forbes was manly as the lover, and the smaller parts were in excellent keeping. The piece was capitally mounted for so small a stage. A. B.

"PLUCK; A STORY OF £50,000."

A Sensational and Domestic Drama, in Seven Tableaux, by HENRY PETTITT and AUGUSTUS HARRIS.

Produced at Drury Lane Theatre, on Saturday, August 5th, 1882.

Stephen Clinton ...	MR. J. H. BARNES.	Tom Bones	MR. BRUTON ROBINS.
George Maitland ...	MR. ARTHUR DACRE.	Jerry Grimstone ...	MR. CHAS. DOUGLAS.
Bevis Marks	MR. HARRY JACKSON.	Tom Owen	MR. W. OZMOND.
John Templeton ...	MR. H. PARKER.	Jack Springfield ...	MR. AUG. HARRIS.
Peter Keene	MR. HARRY NICHOLLS	Florence Templeton	MISS CAROLINE HILL.
William Martin ...	MR. A. COOK.	Mary Keene	MISS AGNES THOMAS.
Matthew Locke ...	MR. JAMES ELMORE.	Polly Burt	MISS M. A. VICTOR.
George Tulloch ...	MR. W. ALBROOK.	Nellie	MISS G. LYONS.
Jem Grimes	MR. JOHN RIDLEY.	Dorothy Butler ...	MISS S. DELPHINE.
Robert Arnold ...	MR. HENRY RIVERS.	Susan Blake	MISS S. FARREN.
Ellen Maitland	MISS LYDIA FOOTE.		

TABLEAU I.—THE SWEETHEARTS (AN ENGLISH HOME).
TABLEAU II.—THE WEDDING BREAKFAST (THE HALL AT THE CEDARS).
TABLEAU III.—THE RAILWAY DISASTER (HAZLEBURY JUNCTION).
TABLEAU IV.—LOCKED IN THE SAFE (THE BANKER'S ROOM).
TABLEAU V.—THE CITY PANIC (THE BROKEN BANK).
TABLEAU VI.—THE GREAT SNOWSTORM (THE CRITERION).
TABLEAU VII.—THE HOUSE ON CRUTCHES (THE CONFLAGRATION).

"PLUCK," the new drama by Messrs. Henry Pettitt and Augustus Harris, is a fair specimen of the kind of work to be expected when the requirements of the drama are subordinated to those of the scene-shifter. Few who have served an apprenticeship to magazine-writing are ignorant of the process described as "writing-up" to a design. A drawing by some more or less known artist is shown to the young poet, and he is expected to supply an idyl interpreting its significance. He must form his conclusions as to the relationship between the characters depicted, and read as best he may the expression, love, scorn, indifference, in the look of the lady, and the response in that of the swain, and must then shape out a little narrative fitting in all respects to what is set before him. A feat of this familiar nature has been accomplished by Messrs. Pettitt and

Harris. The drawing represents a railway collision; the dramatists have framed a story of which an accident of this kind is the centre. A creditable amount of success has been obtained, and the piece, which has not, of course, the slightest claim to consideration as a work of art, is successful in this respect, that it stirs and pleases the public and is likely to divert into the coffers of the management a Pactolean stream that will fill them to overflowing.

There are two lights in which, in a magazine like The Theatre, a new play may be regarded. Leaving to literary organs the task of analysing grace of language, if such can be detected in a class of piece in which one is ordinarily thankful to obtain correct grammar, I have to deal with the dramatic value of the play and the histrionic opportunities it affords. From either standpoint, "Pluck" is disappointing. More than once the dramatists walk up to the confines of drama, and look over the wall on to the land. Apparently not liking the prospect, or not sure of the conduct to be observed if once they enter, they beat a retreat, and elect to remain in a safer and more conventional region. When, after plotting a railway accident, the result of which shall be to kill some passengers travelling by a given train, the villain finds himself compelled, by circumstances beyond his control, to go in the very train that is to be wrecked, a form of poetic justice is realised, and a fine opportunity is offered. Both the dramatic and the histrionic chance is missed, neither being apparently valued. The railway accident results in nothing. Mr. Barnes, the villain, escapes in the confusion, but a less serious matter than a collision between two trains might have been trusted to bring about that result. Mr. Harris, whose principal mission is to be wherever wrong is being done, to resist its perpetration, and to remedy it so far as possible, witnesses a calamity that he is powerless to prevent, and at the risk assuredly of his life aids a lady and a child out of a railway-carriage. This action again can scarcely be regarded as dramatically important. From this central incident, indeed, no dramatic gain whatever is reaped. From the histrionic standpoint the result is equally unsatisfactory. Finding himself by the irony of destiny compelled to travel in a train doomed to certain destruction, Mr. Barnes, as the villain, should be allowed to show the terror of a man who has fallen into a fatal trap of his own laying. He does no such thing. The reason is not

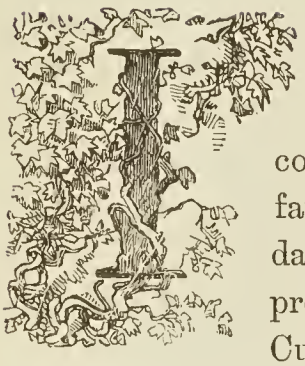
that he is incapable of making such terror thrilling. In this Drury Lane piece there is no time for acting. Scenery and sensation are requisite, and the progress of a play in seven acts, with enormous waits between, is not to be interrupted while any actor, no matter who, gesticulates or makes faces. Here is the worst shortcoming of this class of piece; here the respect in which sensation dramas are an injury to art. A tolerably close observer of what passes upon the stage, I arose from the contemplation of "Pluck" without the slightest idea of what took place at the termination. I saw Mr. Augustus Harris, among whose multifarious functions was that apparently of amateur policeman, walk off one prisoner whose proceedings had been inconsistent with a high code of morality, and I saw him also, after he had rescued all the characters confined within a burning house, engaged in proceedings which I assumed to signify the arrest of the principal villain. The termination, however, I divined rather than understood. No time for any form of adequate explanation was at any moment permitted. A series of tableaux having to be exhibited, the object of all concerned was to make way for them. What manager of Astley's was it, or was it the great Astley himself, who objected to members of his company getting between the audience and his horses? Upon the well-drilled stage of Drury Lane, no actor is so ill-advised as to seek to interfere with the scenery. Mr. Harris, whose power, single-handed, to deal with numbers, and whose ubiquity conveys notions concerning the development of species Darwin has not dared to indicate, does not disturb the view of "the horses." Mr. Jackson's comical complaints, Miss Caroline Hill's caressing ways, Miss Lydia Foote's pathetic moments, Mr. Dacre's remonstrances, and Mr. Nicholls's feeble communings with his own conscience as to the expediency of killing a hundred and twenty people, or thereabouts, not one of whom is guilty of the slightest offence against him, have all to be kept out of the way of the effects. The only scene of genuine action, the only opportunity afforded an actor, occurs when Stephen Clinton, after giving kindly a notice of what he intends, kills the banker, John Templeton. Something like a fight was here exhibited, and it seemed for a time as if the banker would get the better of his younger and more vigorous assailant. Inserting the letter "n," which converts "baker" into "banker," the description of the

combat in De Quincey's famous essay between the Mannheim baker and the amateur murderer, might almost apply to the scene, and the moral of De Quincey may, with slight variation, be accepted: "A pursy, unwieldy, half-cataleptic baker of Mannheim had absolutely fought seven-and-twenty rounds with an accomplished English boxer, merely upon the inspiration; so greatly was natural genius exalted and sublimed by the genial presence of his murderer."*

Liberavi animum. Having pointed out a weakness or defect which I think inherent in this class of composition, I am willing to admit that the effect produced is very striking. Some of the scenes of "Pluck" are as fine as anything ever exhibited upon the stage, and the whole constitutes an elaborate and a stimulating spectacle. The acting, moreover, is admirable if once the standpoint is accepted. Nothing can be better than the contrast between the slimy canting villainy of Peter Keene, one of those malingering rascals who are the disgrace of our nature, and Stephen Clinton, a bold, unscrupulous, and, in the end, ferocious man. What is distinctive in these two types of evil-doers was finely shown by Mr. Nicholls and Mr. Barnes. Mr. Augustus Harris as Jack Springfield played with quietude of style, and accomplished the marvels entrusted to him as though they were a matter of custom. Miss Caroline Hill floated through the farce, an image of grace and tenderness, and Miss Lydia Foote, too long missed from the stage, revealed again her exquisite pathos. Mr. Harry Jackson's presentation of the most virtuous Hebrew ever put upon the stage was broadly comic. Mr. Parker presented the banker effectively, and Mr. Dacre, who is becoming self-conscious, and marring what at one time seemed likely to be a bright career, was seen to fair advantage as George Maitland. Many other parts were well played. So long, however, is the list of characters, that to mention all who call for notice would be to give this account the air of a nomenclature. Joseph Knight.

* De Quincey's Works, Vol. 4, page 34.

Our Omnibus-Box.



I AM indebted to Mr. Wm. Douglas for the following additional and interesting particulars concerning the late Mr. Benjamin Webster: The father of the late Mr. Webster was a teacher of dancing at Bath. In a memoir of the comedian, prefixed to the farce of "Killing no Murder," in Cumberland's British Theatre, the late George Daniel writes: "His father, who had formerly been a composer and actor of pantomime, first came to that city by command of the Duke of York to organise the Volunteers." This account was doubtless furnished by Mr. Webster himself. In the Bath play-bill for June 9th, 1808, occurs the following line: "The favourite dance of the Dusty Miller (in character) by Miss Owens, pupil of Mr. Webster, dancing master of this city;" and in subsequent seasons pupils of Mr. Webster are announced.

The name of Master Webster appears as a dancer in a ballet introduced in the opera of "John of Paris" at Bath, on January 6th, 1815. This may have been Benjamin Webster or his younger brother Frederick. Clara Webster, the celebrated dancer, who was burnt to death at Drury Lane Theatre in December, 1845, was Mr. Webster's half-sister.

On the first appearance of Webster in London, at the Coburg Theatre, in "Trial by Battle," on Whit Monday, 1818, his name only appeared in the bill with a string of others, as "Chorus of Smugglers." He does not appear to have been cast for a part until June 8th, when he is down in the bill for Robert Mortimer, in "Wallace, the Hero of Scotland." Clarkson Stanfield was then one of the scene-painters of the theatre, and the late Mr. Le Clercq ballet-master.

The success of Mr. Webster in Pompey ("Measure for Measure") did not have the effect of materially improving his

position at Drury Lane Theatre for a considerable time, for in 1825–6 we find him appearing in ballet, and playing such parts as the Waiter ("Heir-at-Law"), the Coachman ("Devil to Pay"), Balthazar ("Romeo and Juliet"), his best characters being Rosencrantz, and Titus ("Virginius"). In 1829 he got possession of Humphrey Dobbins and Zekiel Homespun, and in the summer of that year, at the Haymarket, his progress was rapid.

In the summer of 1830, Mr. Webster announced his first benefit at Drury Lane Theatre, jointly with Paul Bedford and Mrs. W. Barrymore, the performances consisting of "The Green-eyed Monster," "Past and Present," "The Dumb Savoyard and his Monkey," a musical piece, in which Mr. Webster sang a comic song called "Analysation," and "The Cataract of the Ganges," in which he played Jack Robinson.

About the same period of his career, Mr. Webster was in the habit, for several years, of giving an entertainment, à la Mathews, at different theatres during Passion Week, and on those nights in Lent when dramatic performances were not permitted, entitled "Webster's Wallet of Waggeries." After he had given up the management of the Haymarket in 1853, he tried the experiment of playing Shakespeare at the Adelphi, where he produced "The Merry Wives of Windsor" with a strong cast, playing Sir John Falstaff himself, but the Adelphi audiences had been accustomed to different fare, and the production was not pecuniarily successful.

Mr. Webster's last appearance was on the occasion of Mrs. Alfred Mellon's benefit at Drury Lane, on May 15th, 1878, when he spoke about a couple of lines in a rhymed address.

His management of the Haymarket Theatre terminated on March 14th, 1853 (not 1844, as stated by Mr. Palgrave Simpson), with a performance of "The Roused Lion," "A Novel Expedient," and "The Pretty Girls of Stillberg."

There seems to be a little uncertainty as to Mr. Webster having had a shop in Holywell Street, but he certainly had one in Drury Lane, which he called "Webster's Theatrical Repository."

There are small theatrical prints extant that were published there. Of course he may have had two shops, but it is not likely.

The latest result of Mr. George R. Sims' efforts at dramatic writing, "A Wise Child," was produced at the Prince of Wales Theatre, Liverpool, on the 31st of July, before an audience that was more numerous and enthusiastic than critical. The cast was as follows:

Ptolemy Timbs ...	MR. G. W. ANSON.	Vickers	MR. F. MORLAND.
Humphrey Jubber...	MR. W. MORGAN.	Croaker	MR. C. J. BURLEIGH.
Adolphus Legge ...	MR. FELIX PITT.	Susannah Clutterbuck	MISS E. ROMER.
Ebenezer Clutterbuck	MR. R. SWEETMAN.	Rosalie	MISS BELL LEWIS.

Esther ... ... MISS CLARA ARMSTRONG.

The piece is described as a comedy, but is admitted to be, and very palpably is, founded on a French vaudeville, which is tantamount to allowing that the term is somewhat of a misnomer, for few works having such a basis can be said to hold the mirror up to Nature, which, as I take it, is one of the fundamental elements of the higher class of humorous dramatic writings. Accepting "The Wise Child" as a three-act farce, and criticising it on these lines, there is, perhaps, not a great deal of exception to be taken to the extremely attenuated plot that forms the raison d'être for the existence of the dramatis personæ, for from works of this class little or no consideration for the canons of art as applied to dramatic writing is expected, their sole end and aim apparently being to produce amusement by an outrageous violation of all human probabilities. In accomplishing this not particularly high aspiration of the farcical comedy writer, the piece under notice seemed, on the evening of its production, to take up a fair position among works of its genre, if the laughter and applause which rang through the auditorium can be said to convey a correct estimate of public appreciation and enjoyment. But unhappily for the author, the noisy exuberance of a provincial audience on a first night often conveys an idea of success quite at variance with the opinion formed by the "judicious few," and no more pronounced instance of this theatrical paradox can be recorded than the reception given to Mr. Sims' work. The situations, which are occasionally funny but never strong, and the action, which proceeds in a halting and lame manner, merely succeed in bringing a happy termination to an unintentional deception, of no especial

interest or originality, practised by a husband on his wife. Ptolemy Timbs, an impecunious and middle-aged architect, having secured the "young affections" of Susannah Clutterbuck, an elderly heiress of a poetical turn of mind, finds that his lady-love will not marry any man who has "loved another." Mr. Timbs being a widower, with a daughter eighteen years old, has presumably "loved another;" but this the gentle Susannah knows nothing of, and Ptolemy, fearful of losing his gilded prize, stifles his conscientiousness sufficiently to let her imagine, up to the marriage-day, that she is "his first, his only love." On the morning of the wedding, however, Ptolemy's conscience asserts itself, and he decides to let Susannah know the truth. This delicate mission is confided to Adolphus Legge, who, however, fails to accomplish his task, and the wedding takes place without the deception being known to the bride. This is the subject matter of the first act, which occupies nearly an hour. The two subsequent scenes are devoted to clearing up this not particularly ingenious complication, which is ultimately done to the satisfaction of all concerned, excepting only the "judicious few," who have grieved in silence over the thoroughly inartistic tone that pervades the whole piece. It is very evident that Mr. Sims has entirely failed to do himself justice in this his last offering to the dramatic stage. Passing over the fact of the plot being abnormally thin—unworthy, in fact, of the dramatist's attention—we come to a consideration of the dialogue and sketches of character for which Mr. Sims may be held more distinctly responsible than for the feebleness of the Gallic story with which they are associated. In both particulars the "comedy" is disappointing. The dialogue rarely soars above the commonplace, save where topics that it were mild to term indelicate are utilised for the display of the author's wit. There are occasional extraneous bits of humour, but they are so strained, so carelessly and clumsily led up to, that their intrinsic merits fail to be effective. The puppets of the play can hardly be called characters, the sum total of their sayings and doings representing nothing beyond a development of individual feebleness and utterly impossible eccentricity. Among the artists in the cast it is only necessary to refer to Mr. G. W. Anson, who, by his graphic facial play and thoroughly comic instincts, provoked much mirth. His sterling abilities, however, were

utterly wasted, from an artistic point of view, in a part that is quite incapable of anything like consistent characterisation.

On the occasion of the benefit of Mr. and Mrs. T. W. Robertson, of Messrs. Robertson and Bruce's "Caste" Company, at the Royal Alhambra Theatre, Barrow in Furness, on July 28th, was produced a new and original farce in one act, by Messrs. C. L. Carson and M. Comerford, entitled :

"ARTFUL LITTLE SPOUSER."

Demosthenes Spouser MR. J. W. BRADBURY | Fluffer ... ... MR. J. H. DARLEY.
Captain Plooks, R.N. MR. RICHD. DALTON | Charles ... ... MR. A. D. ADAMS.
Mrs. Spouser ... ... MISS E. DARNCOMBE.

This little piece, which met with complete success on its production, has the merits of crisp dialogue and a genuinely funny plot. Spouser, a nervous weak-minded individual, marries the daughter of Plooks, a fire-eating blustering old fellow, while the latter is abroad. In addition to his other eccentricities Plooks has an inordinate aversion to people who stutter; as Spouser is troubled, more especially when he is excited, by a marked impediment in his speech, he regards with fear and trembling the first meeting with his father-in-law, and when the fateful hour of contact is approaching his courage evaporates. In sheer desperation he insists to his wife that, during the brief visit the old gentleman is to pay them, he will induce his friend Fluffer, a self-confident young man, to impersonate him and bear the brunt of the first meeting with Plooks. The wife will not hear of such a proposal and leaves the room in a huff and her husband in a state of perplexity. The advent of Charles, a servant, suggests to Spouser that he would, with a little coaching, serve the purpose of interviewing Plooks instead of Fluffer. So it is arranged, to the astonishment of Charles, who goes off to array himself in Spouser's clothes. Fluffer now calls, and meeting Mrs. Spouser is informed by her of her husband's project. Fluffer enters into the scheme and agrees to carry out Spouser's proposal. As may be imagined, upon the arrival of the fiery Plooks, he is met in turn by three claimants to his daughter's hand; the complications arising, and the old gentleman's rough and ready manner of dealing with them, caused roars of laughter. The much-bewildered Spouser was played by Mr. J. W. Bradbury in an exceedingly clever manner, and the rendering of the several parts noted above, by Messrs.

Dalton, Darnley, and Adams, and Miss Darncombe, was marked by spirited but unexaggerated humour.

The last performance in the Prince of Wales's Theatre, previous to its being rebuilt, took place on July 24th. The programme announced the production of a one-act piece, entitled "Merely Players," which is described on another page of this magazine, and the "550th and last performance" of "The Colonel." The following interesting particulars concerning the building are extracted from that useful book, "The Dramatic List": "Many first-rate associations had been connected with the building, which was originally opened as a melodramatic theatre on Easter Monday, April 23rd, 1810, with the result, however, of bringing about the ruin of Mr. Paul, a retired pawnbroker, who became its manager. Succeeding conductors fared little better, until in 1821 it came under the bâton of Mr. Brunton, the father of the celebrated Mrs. Yates. In the interval it had changed its name more than once, and was known successively as The Regency and The West London Theatre. A French company occupied it for some time; and here M. Frédéric Lemaitre made his début in England. Afterwards Mr. Thomas Dibdin assumed the reins with moderate success. On the accession of William the Fourth the theatre was again re-named, and called The Queen's, in compliment to Queen Adelaide; but in 1833 it changed its title to The Fitzroy, under the management of the Mayhews, when "The Wandering Minstrel," afterwards made so famous by the inimitable Robson, was produced. Mr. Henry Mayhew and Mr. Gilbert Abbott a'Beckett were the chief authors of the establishment. In 1835 it came under the management of the celebrated Mrs. Nisbett, who again called it The Queen's; but after passing through the hands of Colonel Addison and Mr. George Wild, it finally came into those of Mr. Charles James, a scenic artist, who retained possession of it from 1839, and who retained the lesseeship while transferring its direction to Mr. Byron and Miss Wilton. On Saturday, April 15th, 1865, it was opened as the Prince of Wales's Theatre. Burlesque —hitherto Miss Wilton's forte—was at the outset the raison d'être of the new establishment. The performances on the opening night comprised "The Winning Hazard" (J. P. Wooler); "La Sonnambula! or, the Supper, the Sleeper, and the Merry Swiss Boy" (H. J. Byron); and Troughton's farce of "Vandyke Brown."

Miss Wilton acted the Merry Swiss Boy, and in the course of the evening spoke a prologue to the audience, which was very neatly written and well received. It was not, however, by means of Mr. Byron's metrical hits, or the production of such skilful work as Mr. Palgrave Simpson's "Fair Pretender," that the new management achieved its most noteworthy triumphs. The elevation of the Prince of Wales's Theatre to the rank of what might be called, with every propriety, the most fashionable and best-frequented theatre in London, dates from the introduction there of modern English comedy — of comedy of a kind hitherto unattempted by any graduate in the younger school of English dramatists. The genius of the late T. W. Robertson supplied the necessary plays for presentation. In their order, those plays as produced at the Prince of Wales's Theatre stand as follows: "Society," on Saturday, November 11th, 1865; "Ours," on Saturday, September 15th, 1866; "Caste," Saturday, April 6th, 1867; "Play," Saturday, February 15th, 1868; "School," Saturday, January 16th, 1869; and "M.P.," Saturday, April 23rd, 1870."

Mr. Mechelen Rogers gave a recital at the Birkbeck Institute on Wednesday evening, August 9th, the subject being Dickens's "Christmas Carol." The recitation was given without the aid of any book, and Mr. Rogers, in addition to a valuable memory, proved that he knew how to suit the action to the word, his expression and gesture being most appropriate.

"The Lights o' London" was played in Edinburgh for the first time on August 14th. "The Scotsman," in noticing the performance of the play, says that "It treats largely of the seamy side of life; and before it is withdrawn one is tired of the utter miserableness of the picture presented, and longs for relief. Upon the wretched hero and heroine the author has especially laid a heavy, harrowing burden; and they have to suffer much—too much, most will think—before poetic justice is meted out to them." What on earth will "The Scotsman" say when "The Romany Rye" is produced in Edinburgh?

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The Theatre.

OCTOBER, 1882.

THE SCHOOL OF DRAMATIC ART.

THE School of Dramatic Art that gave rise to so much discussion, that was so warmly supported in some quarters and so loudly pooh-poohed in others, has now more than a visionary and shadowy name. It has a local habitation, already in the hands of the decorators and furnishers. Plenty of pupils, male and female, have enrolled their names and given satisfactory references, and the early weeks of October will see the professors at their posts, and the School, I trust, in full swing.

I have had the pleasure of inspecting the building in which the classes will be held, and I think everyone will congratulate Captain Hozier and Mr. Edmund Routledge, the commissioners appointed by the executive committee to obtain a home for the School, on having secured the very best possible place for the purpose in all London. Many of my readers will remember the Dilettante Club in Argyll Street, Regent Street, next door to Mr. Hengler's Circus, and within, literally, a stone's-throw of Regent Street, Oxford Street, and the Oxford Circus. This little institution did a good deal of simple, honest work in its way, and will be pleasantly remembered. It assisted the ambitious designs of clever amateurs, it brought out new plays and operas that would otherwise have been buried, and it encouraged the social intimacy of people with brains and artistic taste. I never could understand why actors and actresses so constantly sneer

at amateurs, considering that they are the most constant of play-goers, and conscientiously support the theatre. They like acting themselves, but they are also particularly careful to see others act. Well, the Dilettante Club, apart from its curious eccentricity in the matter of the "Church and Stage Guild" held under its roof, and distinct from its pardonable peculiarities, gave to this building in Argyll Street three things that the Dramatic School most earnestly required, namely: (A) a theatre, (B) a magnificent ball-room with echoing rafters where M. Angelo can teach fencing, and Madame Michau can have her dancing classes, and (C) innumerable class-rooms where the young idea can be taught on the "hearth-rug" before he is ready to be instructed on the stage. The whole arrangement and discipline of the school have been cleverly mapped out by the energetic commissioners. It will be seen by the time-list printed below that the ladies and gentlemen's classes do not clash, that there is plenty of hard work before them, and that there will be no chance of idling in Argyll Street. The School is not a club, with reading-rooms and newspapers, luncheons and luxuries, but emphatically a place for work and not for talk. When the pupils have finished with their classes they will be expected to go away, and indeed, so far as I can see, there will be no inducement in Argyll Street for them to remain. It will be useful, I think, if I here print the rules that have been framed for the guidance of the School of Dramatic Art, containing the terms for the various lectures, and this will be an answer to innumerable kind correspondents who have taken an interest in the School and asked my advice on the matter. The Theatre travels far, and over many continents, and I may here remark with pleasure on the fact that amongst the pupils already enrolled are several American ladies who intend to adopt the stage as a profession.

The School will open and instruction will commence on Wednesday, October 4th, 1882, and the First Term will terminate on Wednesday, December 20th, 1882.

DAY CLASSES.

FIRST TERM.

Elocution will be taught twice each week, and the lesson will last about two hours.

Fencing	do.	do.	do.
Dancing	do.	do.	do.
Stage Gesture	do.	do.	do.

Lectures on Subjects of Dramatic interest will be delivered every Wednesday, to which the public will be admitted on payment.

Entrance fee to the School for the whole course, £3.

FEES.

	£	s.	d.
Elocution - - - -	6	0	0
Fencing - - - -	3	0	0
Dancing - - - -	3	0	0
Stage Gesture and Deportment - -	3	0	0
Lecture - - - -	Free to Pupils.		

The Second Term will commence on Wednesday, January 3rd, 1883, and will terminate on Wednesday, March 21st, 1883.

The course will be similar to that of the first term, but the terms will be reduced :

FEES.

	£	s.	d.
Elocution - - - -	3	0	0
Fencing - - - -	3	0	0
Dancing - - - -	3	0	0
Stage Gesture and Deportment - -	3	0	0
Lecture - - - -	Free to Pupils.		

The Third Term will commence on Monday, March 26th, 1883, and terminate on Wednesday, June 9th, 1883.

The Fourth Term will commence on Wednesday, June 13th, 1883, and terminate on Wednesday, August 18th, 1883.

The Pupil will pay £3 per term for the third and fourth terms.

The instruction during these terms will consist of Rehearsal, conducted daily, under the direction of the Stage Manager of the Institution, supplemented by those Professors best calculated to superintend plays of some peculiar or special character or period.

At the end of each term public performances will be given by those pupils sufficiently advanced to take part in them. These performances will be repeated even more frequently if practicable.

EVENING CLASSES.

FIRST TERM.

Elocution will be taught twice each week, and the lesson will last about two hours.

Fencing will be taught once each week, and the lesson will last about two hours.

Dancing, do. do. do.

Stage Gesture and Deportment, do. do.

Entrance fee to the School for the whole course, £2.

FEES.

	£	s.	d.
Elocution - - - -	6	0	0
Fencing - - - -	1	10	0
Dancing - - - -	1	10	0
Stage Gesture - - - -	1	10	0

SECOND TERM—FEES.

	£	s.	d.
Elocution	3	0	0
Fencing	1	10	0
Dancing	1	10	0
Stage Gesture	1	10	0

THIRD TERM, £3. FOURTH TERM, £3.

The Classes for Ladies will be completely distinct from the Classes for Gentlemen. The pupils will meet only at rehearsal, when the Ladies will be under the immediate charge of the Lady Superintendent, who will be present at every rehearsal.

The Committee have made every possible arrangement to enable Lady Pupils to pursue the entire course of study under the same careful control and supervision as they would be subject to in every high-class school or college.

Ladies and Gentlemen wishing to study any of the subjects of instruction singly, can do so by paying the same rate per subject as the other Pupils, and an entrance fee of £1.

All Pupils will be required to produce satisfactory references.

Members of the Theatrical profession, or their children, will be admitted at a reduction of one-fourth on all fees.

In order to make a start, the first-formed classes in October will be held by the following professorate:

Elocution.—Mrs. Chippendale, Rev. A. J. D'Orsey, Mr. C. J. Plumptre.

Fencing.—M. Angelo.

Dancing.—Madame Michau.

Expression and Pantomime.—M. Paul Martinetti.

The time-list has been arranged as follows, and it may be remarked at once that the drudgery will be most severe during the first term:

GENTLEMEN'S CLASSES.

Monday and Thursday.—10 to 12, Stage Gesture. 3 to 5, Fencing.
Wednesday.—Lecture
Tuesday and Friday.—10 to 12, Elocution. 3 to 5, Dancing.

LADIES' CLASSES.

Monday and Thursday.—11 to 1, Elocution. 2 to 4, Dancing.
Wednesday.—Lecture.
Tuesday and Friday.—11 to 1, Stage Gesture. 2 to 4, Fencing.

EVENING CLASSES.—MEN ONLY.

Monday, Elocution. Tuesday, Fencing. Wednesday, Stage Gesture. Thursday, Elocution. Friday, Dancing. Hours, 7 to 9.

Very special attention should be drawn, I think, to the evening classes.

Now is the time for seeing if the earnest young men who write to me about going on the stage are really sincere. Many of them cannot afford to relinquish their employment, but they can surely employ their evening hours in this most desirable and profitable manner. A little sacrifice of the billiard-room and the music-hall would enable them to rub off the rough edges at any rate, if they really mean to work hard at the art that entices them. Unless I am mistaken, these evening classes—only possible at present for gentlemen—will be as popular as any and will be well filled. I have no doubt that the Committee will be able to throw in an occasional lecture as well. The worst of it is that in the preliminary stages the professors can take very few pupils; but there are plenty of class-rooms at Argyll-street, and it is confidently hoped that distinguished actors like Mr. Hermann Vezin, who would inspire more confidence than any instructor, will be able to give their valuable services occasionally, and that artists like Mr. Creswick and Mr. James Anderson will come to the front and take a class.

It will not have been forgotten that the poet Goethe, who was also a theatrical manager, has propounded some very wholesome truths on the subject of stage instruction, which I heartily commend to the attention of all who are inclined to throw cold water on the new School. Eckermann thus relates a conversation with Goethe on the subject:

"This evening at Goethe's. Since conversation upon the theatre and theatrical management were now the order of the day, I asked him upon what maxims he proceeded in the choice of a new member of the company.

"'I can scarcely say,' returned Goethe; 'I had various modes of proceeding. If a striking reputation preceded the new actor, I let him act, and saw how he suited the others—whether his style and manner disturbed our ensemble, or whether he would supply a deficiency. If, however, he was a young man who had never trodden a stage before, I first considered his personal qualities—whether he had about him anything prepossessing or attractive, and, above all things, whether he had control over himself. For an actor who possesses no self-possession, and who cannot appear before a stranger in his most favourable light, has, generally speaking, little talent. His whole profession requires continual self-denial, and a continual existence in a foreign mask.

"'If his appearance and his deportment pleased me, I made him read, in order to test the power and extent of his organ, as well as the capabilities of his mind. I gave him some sublime passage from a great poet, to see whether he was capable of feeling and expressing what was really great, then something passionate and wild, to prove his power. I then went to something marked by sense and smartness, something ironical and witty, to see how he treated such things, and whether he possessed sufficient freedom. Then I gave him something in which was represented the pain of a wounded heart, the suffering of a great soul, that I might learn whether he had it in his power to express pathos.

"'If he satisfied me in all these numerous particulars, I had a well-grounded hope of making him a very important actor. If he appeared more capable in some particulars than in others, I remarked the line to which he was most adapted. I also now knew his weak points, and above all endeavoured to work upon him so that he might strengthen and cultivate himself here. If I remarked faults of dialect, and what are called provincialisms, I urged him to lay them aside, and recommended to him social intercourse and friendly practice with some member of the stage who was entirely free from them. I then asked him whether he could dance and fence, and if this were not the case, I would hand him over to the dancing and fencing masters.

"'If he were now sufficiently advanced to make his appearance, I gave him at first such parts as suited his individuality, and I desired nothing but that he should represent himself. If he now appeared to me of too fiery a nature, I gave him phlegmatic characters; if too calm and tedious, I gave him fiery and hasty characters, that he might thus learn to lay aside himself, and assume foreign individuality.'"

Meanwhile the School heartily deserves support from all who believe in the scheme. Captain Hozier and Mr. Edmund Routledge have done all that enthusiasts can do; they have made themselves personally responsible for the rent of the School buildings, and have been throughout indefatigable, as also has the excellent and courteous secretary, Mr. Cecil Raleigh. The Commissioners have issued the following prospectus:

"We beg to inform you that on the 26th of July the Executive Committee of the School of Dramatic Art appointed us Commissioners to carry out all necessary arrangements for

the opening of the School, and delegated to us full powers for that purpose.

"Our first step has been to secure large and convenient premises in Argyll Street, Regent Street, containing excellent Class Rooms, a Concert Hall holding about 600 people, and a small Theatre. These we have had thoroughly cleaned and furnished in the most economical manner by Messrs. Shoolbred and Mr. George Bignay of the Court and Prince of Wales's Theatres. In the interests of the School we have not hesitated to render ourselves personally liable for the rent of these premises and for the carrying out of certain covenants under the lease of the same, and we feel justified in now calling upon all Members of the Committee to vigorously assist in endeavouring to assure the success of the scheme. We have many reasons for believing that, probably in a few months, the School will become nearly, if not altogether, self-supporting. During the first three months of its existence the expenses will, however, be unquestionably heavy—heavier in fact than at any other time. We therefore trust that all Members of the Committee and sympathisers with our endeavour will at once do their utmost to obtain immediate contributions towards the successful establishment of the School of Dramatic Art.—We are, your obedient servants,

"Henry M. Hozier,
"Edmund Routledge."

I may remark, in parenthesis, that amateurs need not any longer be in any difficulty about getting a hall and reception-rooms, or a theatre and dressing-rooms for their winter entertainments, for the Committee will shortly be prepared to make arrangements for private theatricals, concerts, and evening receptions at the School at Argyll Street when the rooms are not otherwise occupied. This will not interfere with the regular course of instruction, and will utilise a capital and convenient building. So the ship starts under full sail, and everyone will wish it a prosperous voyage, bringing eventually to the harbour of the stage brave men and good women. C. S.

RACHEL IN THE UNITED STATES.

FOR eighteen years Rachel reigned supreme at the Théâtre Français. During that period the few rivals who had arisen, or been raised up, against her, had found it vain to endeavour to dispute her sovereignty. Not in France alone, but in nearly every other European country, her career had been one continued triumph; and when she visited England, in 1841, the Queen, in recognition of her genius, presented her with a bracelet, the inscription on it—formed by diamonds—being "Victoria to Mdlle. Rachel."

At last, however, a rival entered the lists who was not to be so easily crushed as former ones had been. On May 24th, 1855, Ristori made her first appearance at the Italian Opera House in Paris, as Francesca di Rimini. Her success was immediate and complete; indeed, so far as could be judged, it exceeded that which had attended the début of Rachel herself. The critics were almost unanimous in their praise of the Italian actress, whose fine impersonations of the characters she assumed undoubtedly merited the encomiums bestowed upon them. The French press, too, weary of the ascendency of Rachel—who certainly could not be accused of having borne her honours too meekly—caught eagerly at the chance which presented itself of using Ristori to cast the great tragedienne from the pedestal she had so long undisputedly occupied. Jules Janin, who wielded in the theatrical world an influence such as no critic before, or since, ever exercised, was one of the first to "go over to the enemy." He conceived that to his pen Rachel had, at the outset of her career, been largely indebted for the prompt recognition her abilities had met with from the public, and, having quarrelled with her, he hailed the advent of Ristori—of whom he spoke in terms of extravagant eulogy—as affording a favourable opportunity of punishing his former favourite for what he deemed the ingratitude with which she had repaid the services he had rendered her.

At this conjuncture Rachel took the resolution of visiting the New World. To this enterprise she had, for some time past, been

urged by her brother, Raphael Felix, whose imagination had been inflamed by reports of the enormous sums made by Jenny Lind in America; and he had endeavoured to induce his sister to accede to his proposition by the tempting offer of 1,200,000 francs for an eighteen months' tour through the United States. The desire for gain, the importunities of her brother—who expected to realise a fortune for himself—the solicitations of her sisters, Sarah, Dinah, and Lia, who were each to receive 190,000 francs for her services—all these had combined to prompt Rachel to undertake the adventure. But she had still hesitated, entertaining, it is said, a singular aversion to crossing the ocean, when the appearance of Ristori in Paris decided her. Not only had her jealousy been thoroughly aroused by the continued and triumphant success of this distinguished artist—for she could "brook no rival near the throne"—but the conviction had forced itself upon her that, temporarily at least, her star was eclipsed, and that it would not be a bad stroke of policy were she to absent herself from Paris for some little time. She, therefore, one day, announced to her family her intention of closing with the offer which had been made her to go abroad; and the project was, without delay, put in execution. Raphael Felix engaged a company to support his sister, which would appear to have been a very fair one. It numbered amongst its members Mdlles. Dinah and Lia Felix, M. Dieudonné, and M. Leon Beauvallet—all of them performers of more than average merit. In July and August, 1855, Rachel and her troupe appeared in London, and on the 11th of the latter month she left Liverpool in the steamer Pacific for New York, in which city, on September 3rd, she made her first appearance as Camille in "Les Horaces" of Corneille.

In most European countries there is a section of the community possessing both the means and the leisure which enable the members of it to render themselves masters of various modern languages, not simply from books, but through the medium of foreign travel. In nearly every large city of the Union a similar class now exists; but a quarter of a century ago it was not so. At that period it was far less common than at present for Americans to visit Europe, and, even amongst educated people, few were to be found who spoke any other tongue than their own. The French colony in New York was a small one, and the prices of admission to the boxes and "parquette" having been raised from one dollar to

three dollars, prevented its being very numerously represented on any occasion during Rachel's engagement. It is, therefore, no exaggeration to assert that, of the audience which on her first night crowded every part of the theatre, not one individual in twenty had the slightest acquaintance with the French language. Indeed, in anticipation of the impediment this circumstance must necessarily prove to the appreciation of the performance, books of the play had been printed, with the original text on one page, and a translation of it, en régard, on the other. Almost every person in the house was provided with one of these books, and the result was rather curious. Instead of the spectators giving, as is ordinarily the case, their undivided attention to the stage, they only glanced at it from time to time, keeping their eyes for the most part riveted upon the text, they being animated by a similar sentiment to that of Mungo, in "The Padlock," where he demands: "What for me hear, if me no understand?"

It was not, however, simply the obstacles offered by a foreign language to their enjoyment of the performance that the spectators on this occasion had to contend against, but the character of the play itself was, to the great bulk of them, a complete, and by no means agreeable, surprise. With the French classic dramatists, and with the principles on which their plays were constructed, but few people were acquainted; and the majority of the audience, if asked to define in what consisted the "unities," would have been able to do so about as correctly as the gentleman on whom Nicholas Nickleby, when a member of the Crummles company, called to solicit his patronage for Miss Snevellicci's "bespeak." That there should be no change of scene throughout the piece, and that the curtain should never fall between the acts, the stage being simply left vacant for a brief interval, puzzled the audience not a little; whilst the meagreness of the plot, the poverty of incident, the long and tedious speeches of many of the characters, rendered the play decidedly wearisome. What Macaulay said of the Iphigénie of Racine, that his Greeks were "mere names, mere words, printed in capitals at the head of paragraphs of declamation," applies, in a greater or less degree, to every one of his contemporaries; and it is not easy to regard the heroes and heroines of the classic drama as real human beings with whose loves or misfortunes one can sympathise. Englishmen, even, who can read in the original and thoroughly appreciate the prose writers of France, entertain, as a

rule, a natural aversion to French heroic verse, and, as an eminent critic has declared, "avoid Racine and Corneille with an instinctive dread of boredom."

It is not, therefore, to be wondered at that an audience, such as I have described, found the earlier scenes of "Les Horaces" tedious in the extreme, and awaited with impatience the appearance of Rachel. When at last, clad in a simple white robe, she entered upon the stage, there was a grace and dignity in her every movement which, even before she had uttered a single word, impressed the spectator with the conviction that he was in the presence of a great mistress of her art. Rachel had, as is well known, no pretensions to beauty, and the expression of her countenance was one of the most unhappy I have ever seen; but her worn, weary aspect, her sad, mournful eyes, were not ill-suited to the tragic rôles she habitually assumed. When she spoke, her voice was, I perceived, no longer so full and round as when I had seen her in Paris some few years previously, and she appeared, too, not to have fully recovered from the fatigue of her sea-voyage. Yet, notwithstanding these drawbacks, her Camille was a magnificent piece of acting. It was, indeed, evidence of the genius of the artist, that she was successful in imparting interest to scenes which, in themselves, touch no sympathetic chord in the soul, but appeal simply to the judgment and the intellect. The curse in the fourth act in particular she gave with a burst of fury which fairly electrified the audience:

> Puisse-je de mes yeux y voir tomber ce foudre
> Voir ses maisons en cendre et tes lauriers en poudre
> Voir le dernier Roman à son dernier soupir
> Moi, seule, en être cause, et mourir de plaisir.

The lines in themselves are tame enough, but the force and intensity with which they were delivered produced an effect such as I have rarely witnessed. The enthusiastic reception this speech met with was, however, an exception. On the whole, admirable as was Rachel's rendering of Camille, it was "caviare to the multitude;" and, throughout the evening, save on the occasions referred to, there was a lack of spontaniety and warmth about the applause she received which plainly evinced that the audience were but little touched by the woes of the character she impersonated. It was, indeed, not difficult for any observant person to predict that there was no likelihood of Rachel's achieving the

success in the United States she had confidently anticipated. In fact, her visit to America was, in every way, unfortunate in its results. Not only did it prove financially a failure, but she contracted there the malady which terminated fatally soon after her return to Europe.

The press, the morning after Rachel's first appearance in New York, was almost unanimous in the eulogistic language in which it spoke of her acting, and, for a time, she drew fairly good houses. The management, however, soon discovered that the public preferred the modern drama—the "Angelo" of Victor Hugo, and the "Adrienne Lecouvreur" of Scribe and Legouvé—to the colder and more classic tragedies of Racine and Corneille. Frequent representations of these two plays were consequently given. The latter piece has several strong situations which afford opportunities for the display alternately of intense pathos and the fiercest passion; and, in the expression of these emotions, Rachel was—so far as the French stage was concerned—without a compeer. When Adrienne interposes to shield her hated rival from the humiliation she has most richly merited, her "Et moi, je vous protège" was superb; whilst the bitter scorn and hate with which she delivered the final lines of the recitation from "Phédre":

> Qui goutant dans le crime une honteuse paix,
> Ont su faire un front, qui ne rougit jamais,

never failed to bring down the house. Her death scene, too, was powerful—painfully so—and not easily forgotten by any one who had once witnessed it. As Adrienne, Rachel was, undoubtedly, better appreciated in New York than in any other character. Nevertheless, even this play, the most popular in her repertory, failed to attract large audiences. The "upper ten thousand" had at first crowded to witness her performances; but this class was not, at that period, numerous enough to fill the theatre night after night for any length of time. It became necessary, therefore, to appeal to the middle-class play-goers, and, with this object in view, the prices of admission, which had at the commencement of the season been extravagantly high, were considerably reduced. This action on the part of the management was temporarily successful. Many persons, partly out of curiosity to see the "great foreign actress," and partly in order that they might have it in their power to say that they had seen her, went to the Metropolitan Theatre

once, but they seldom did so a second time. Rachel, however, necessarily failed to attract that considerable section of the community, the members of which are utterly indifferent to the fact of a particular form of entertainment being fashionable, if it be one they themselves do not care for. Of their inability to appreciate or even understand the French drama they made frank acknowledgment, and were no whit ashamed. Their sentiments on the subject resembled those of the individual in Fontenelle's "Plurality of Worlds," who, when reproached with his ignorance of Astronomy, retorts: "Croyez-vous m'avoir humiliér de m'avoir informer que la lune tourne autour de la terre? Je vous assure que je ne m'en estime moins."

The Puritan element in the character of the inhabitants of several of the Northern and Eastern States manifests itself in a rooted aversion to the theatre. In New York, at the period of which I speak, it was, curiously enough, not so much to the character of the entertainment as to the place where it was given, that in numerous instances an objection was cherished, and, absurd and illogical as the distinction may appear, the witnessing the representation of a play at Niblo's Garden or Barnum's Museum, was, in the opinion of a certain class, morally a very different thing from going to see the same piece at Burton's, or the Metropolitan Theatre. To conciliate, therefore, the prejudices of those persons who might be desirous of hearing her, but who otherwise would have enjoyed no opportunity of doing so consistently with their principles, Rachel, on her off-nights, gave a series of readings at the Broadway Tabernacle. These "readings" consisted not simply of selections from the French poets, but also of the performance by herself and other members of the company, of entire scenes from various plays. As already stated, to the drama, under these conditions, the non-theatre-going public entertained no insuperable objection, and the first few "readings" were, consequently, pretty well attended. But they, too, soon ceased to draw.

The French residents of New York—many of them staunch Republicans, who had been compelled to fly their native country for the part they had played in opposing the Coup d'Etât—had frequently solicited Rachel to sing the "Marseillaise," which, for some time, she steadily refused to do. Her unwillingness to comply with the request arose, probably, from a doubt of how

her acceding to it might affect her interests on her return to Paris—the former national hymn being in rather bad odour with the Imperial Government. However, it was obviously desirable in view of the nightly diminishing receipts to offer some new attraction to the public, and it was accordingly announced that on October 12th, and several subsequent nights, the "Marseillaise" would be given by Rachel after the play. Her delivery of the lines was powerful and dramatic in the extreme, but she chaunted rather than sang them, having quite lost whatever voice she might once have possessed. The "Marseillaise" proved a decided attraction; and it continued to constitute a feature of each evening's entertainment during the remainder of the season.

From New York, Rachel, with her troupe, went to Boston, where she made her first appearance on October 27th. She met with a highly favourable reception, the theatre being crowded in every part, and the audience being composed of the very élite of society.

Boston entertains an intense jealousy of New York. She has never forgotten that, in the pre-revolutionary days, and, indeed, for many years subsequent to that epoch, she ranked first amongst the cities of the North American Continent. This supremacy New York, after a lengthened struggle, finally wrested from her; and, so complete was the victory that, in less than a quarter of a century thereafter, as regards population, wealth, and commercial importance, there could no longer be any question of rivalry between them. But socially Boston still claimed the superiority, and habitually assumed that in all matters relating to literature or art the culture of her citizens was infinitely higher than that of those of New York. Indeed, one of the surest passports to the favour of society in the former city, on the part of any eminent foreign artist, was that he or she should not have met with appreciation from the "Gothamites." This phase of feeling, I may observe en passant, received a marked illustration in the case of Fechter. A failure in New York, he was a decided success in Boston, where, the press declared, his merits as an actor appealed to a public whose "cultivated taste could recognise and appreciate his peculiar excellencies." It followed, therefore, that as in New York a preference had been shown for the romantic over the classic drama, society in Boston declared itself in favour of the

latter, and "Phédre," "Les Horaces," and "Bajazet" drew more fashionable audiences than "Angelo," "Adrienne Lecouvreur," or "Marie Steuart."

In Boston the theatre-going class is, in proportion to the population, much smaller than in New York. In fact, throughout the New England States the descendants of the Puritans are, in their disapproval of the drama, faithful to the traditions of the race from which they sprung. In Connecticut no dramatic entertainment of any kind has ever been permitted. In Massachusetts, with the exception of Boston, the same has been the case. Even in that city, at the time of which I speak, no theatre was allowed to be open on Saturday evenings, lest by any accident the performance should extend over midnight, and so trench upon the "Day of Rest." Owing to the causes to which I have referred, Rachel's engagement in Boston was a brief one, and she returned to New York early in November. On this occasion she appeared at the Academy of Music, alternating with the Italian Opera, but she had ceased to be a novelty, and night after night the receipts at the doors were inadequate to meet the expenses of the company. On the 17th of the month, consequently, she closed her second and, as it proved, her last season in New York. The pieces in which she appeared on the occasion were "Phédre" and "Le Moineau de Lesbie," the latter a charming little pastoral in which she was truly admirable.

The profits derived by Rachel from her visit to the United States had, up to this period, been considerable, notwithstanding the losses latterly sustained. But her gains fell far short of what she and her brother — who acted as her entrepreneur — had anticipated; and they did not approach the sum made by Jenny Lind in the same space of time. M. L. Beauvallet, who, on his return to Europe, published an itinerary of the tour of the troupe in America, states that the result of thirty-one concerts in New York, and seven in Boston, given by Jenny Lind, was receipts amounting to 335,409 dols., whilst the Rachel company, by precisely the same number of performances, realised only 119,758 dols. Out of her share of the profits Rachel had, in the first instance, made large remittances to France. Henceforth, however, she not only ceased to do so, but she was, ere long, under the necessity of borrowing money to cover the constantly recurring deficit in the treasury; for without her the troupe played

to almost empty benches, and her future appearances were destined to be but few. Whilst at the Metropolitan Theatre she had contracted a severe cold which clung obstinately to her, and when from New York she went to Philadelphia, the deadly chillness of the Walnut Street Theatre struck fatally home to her lungs, already in a weak and irritable condition. After only one performance there she was compelled to take to her bed, from which she did not rise for a whole month. The company in the meanwhile went on to Charleston, South Carolina, without her. There she at last joined them, and on December 17th, 1855, she played Adrienne, taking her farewell, although she then little dreamt it, of the stage for ever. From Charleston she went with her troupe to Havana, still hoping shortly to be able to act again. But it was not to be. Day by day she grew weaker and weaker, until, at last, feeling that it was useless to prolong the struggle, she decided to return to Europe. Hopelessly consumptive, her subsequent visit to Egypt, the mild climate of which she fondly hoped might restore her health, only delayed, but could not prevent, the fatal termination of her malady. Returning to her native country in the autumn of 1857, she went to Cannes and took up her abode at the Villa Sardou, then owned by a relative of the eminent author of that name. There, almost alone, she died on January 5th, 1858.

Thus passed away the greatest tragic actress France has ever produced. Indeed, the highest testimony to her genius is that she, and she alone, was able to give vitality and vigour to the cold and colourless creations of the classic dramatists; and, by her magnificent impersonation of their heroines, to render them not only endurable, but actually a source of gratification to the play-goers of her own generation.

W. C. M.

THE PRIDE OF THE TROOP.

(SEE POEM.)

Poem for Recitation.

THE PRIDE OF THE TROOP.

UP in a garret of London town, and wearily waiting with whitened head,
An old man sat with his prayers alone, for joy was over and hope lay dead.
A summer ago when the mocking sun, the musical wind and the laughing wave,
Were telling of life once more; he stood in the old churchyard by an open grave.
For there in the shade of the darkened yews, they lowered away from the sight of men
The woman and wife who had lightly scored the furrows of three score years and ten.
Mary melted a year before, like the feathery flakes of the early snow
To smooth the pillow, and rest the head, of her tender mother by death laid low.
Desolate, childless—all but one—he said, "I await the Avenger's rod,
But spare him only, my only son; he's called the 'Pride of the Troop,' thank God!"

He sat alone—and the city's roar went up to him there on the topmost floor,
He heard the rush of the street below, his heart stopped short as they passed the door;
Careless voices they sent it on "Fearful Battle! and lists of slain!"
"Special Edition" for men who sneer, and women who never will smile again.
"Cavalry charge of the Englishmen!" such as the poets of old rehearse,
Plucky enough for the patriot's praise, bloody enough for the Radical's curse.

"Coward escape of the miscreant wretch" who in heat of battle could sneak away,
And leave his slaves to the bayonet-point, and the awful cheer of a splendid day.
Ever alone the old man sat, listening hard, whilst his eyelids droop;
"God of Battles, oh hear my prayer! What have you done with the Pride of the Troop!"

A minute more and a sound was heard—the throb of terrible doubt was o'er,
For someone stopp'd in the street below, and someone stood at the old man's door.
Every second it seemed an age; the old man tottered and held his breath,
And a whistling lad, with a popular tune, delivered the message of life? No, death!
"Our hearts go out to you every one—if this isn't true it's the last I speak—
"For men of the stuff that your boy was made, I'll swear they weren't made every week.
"I shook his hand, and he gripped it hard, when the bugle sounded his last 'Good-night,'
"And I saw him once, his sword in hand, cutting right and left in the thick of the fight.
"'I shall never come back to the boys again; I'm as good as gone!' were the words he said,
"And the joy of the morrow was halved with pain, for the beautiful Pride of the Troop lay dead."
And this was all that his father read, as the blinding teardrops dimmed the news;
But this wasn't all that there was to tell of the Pride of a Troop of Her Majesty's Blues!
I heard the tale, and I venture now to tell it just as it should be told,
'Twas only a woman false as hell, who killed a man who was true as gold!

* * * * *

"I shall never come back to the boys again; I'm as good as gone!" Do you mind that now?

There was something more in those simple words than they seem to say. Ah, you ask me how?
Well, they didn't mean this, that the grasp and touch of the hand of Fate made coward of Jim;
And you'll think pretty much the same, I guess, when you hear from me what I heard of him.

There was a woman—there always is—of the silky sort, with a mouth and mane
All tiger yellow, uncertain eyes, and hair now dullish, now gold as grain.
She was a woman of splendid form, with skin so white that I really think
She'd have driven one-half of the world to kill, and an average lot of the rest to drink.
She loved poor Jim in her amorous way—he'd have kissed the ground that had touched her feet;
And she came to the barracks as bold as brass, and married him off in Albany Street.
It all went well for a year or more, and he was as happy as day, you know,
When the war broke out, and the world has seen how the "feather-bed warriors" swore they'd go;
Claiming to fight, as their fathers fought before a war was a grievous sin;
Leaving their mothers and wives to God! boot and saddle, they all fell in!

Merciful Heaven! what beasts there are who cross the path of a man through life—
Venomous wretches, who write "Good friend!—but can it be true of your lovely wife?"
One such letter it came to Jim, scribbled and scrawled by an unknown pen—
Why does the earth refuse to swallow the slimy toads who are miscalled men?
Oh! but the letter, it spoke so fair, came, of course, from a Christian kind,
And it said: "When the Pride of the Troop has gone, he will leave the Pride of his Troop behind."

And in the letter a note was slipped, all black with folly and red with guilt;
But the transport-vessel was miles away ere vengeance followed or blood was spilt.
We only noticed our friend grew sad; his eyes would flash, and his face would burn,
And he kept on saying: "The die is cast. I have said good-bye, and shall not return!"

He had scarcely been at the front a day when he seemed so rash that we held him back;
But he claimed a promise the colonel gave for a dangerous post in the first attack,
And there he fell as he wished to fall, and the men rode on who had loved him well,
And chased the enemy far away to the sands of death—is there more to tell?
Well, only this. When I found him dead, and over his body I chanced to stoop,
I found the letter with life-blood stained—it had come from the heart of the Pride of the Troop!

London, September, 1882. Clement Scott.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

By Frederick Hawkins.

THE announcement that Mr. Irving and Miss Terry are about to appear as Benedick and Beatrice has naturally aroused the keenest interest among those who care for the higher forms of stage-work. It has even reconciled many of us to another postponement of the promised revival of "Coriolanus," the scenery for which, by the way, is said to have been sketched from beginning to end by no less competent a pencil than that of Mr. Alma Tadema. In truth, "Much

Ado About Nothing" is not very familiar to the public through the medium of the stage, and it may well be presumed that to the charm of comparative novelty the performances at the Lyceum will unite the varied attractiveness which Mr. Irving has imparted to most of his enterprises at that theatre. Whatever the result may be, it cannot fail to make the play studied with increased zest. Since Mr. Irving appeared as Hamlet, as anybody with a good memory knows, Shakespeare has been more frequently quoted in a month than in any of the years during which his name was held to be another term for managerial ruin; and before long, no doubt, the figures of Benedick and Beatrice, of Dogberry and Verges, will again take hold of the popular mind. With such a prospect before us, perhaps an outline of the history of the comedy may not be thought ill-timed.

"Much Ado About Nothing," then, was given to the world at the end of what may be roughly called Shakespeare's immature period—at the time when his gifts were on the point of finding their highest and most lasting expression. It is not mentioned in the play-catalogue of 1598; in 1600, after having been "sundrie times publikely acted by the Right Honourable the Lord Chamberlaine his servants," probably at the Globe, it was "printed by V. S. for Andrew Wise and William Aspley." Here, as in most of his plays, the poet was not afraid to work with rather stale materials. But few of the gallants and fine ladies who flocked to the theatre were unacquainted with the story he set himself to relate. It had been invented for the "Orlando Furioso," where Polinesso, in order to revenge himself on the Princess Geneuvra for having rejected him in favour of Ariodante, "prevails upon her attendant Dalinda to personate the princess, and to appear on a balcony by moonlight, while he ascends to her apartments by a ladder of ropes." Now, Sir John Harrington had translated the "Orlando Furioso" into English, and a play entitled "Ariodante and Geneuvra" had been represented before the Queen and her Court. Bandello, too, had employed the injury done to the princess as the groundwork of his most elaborate novel, which had become well known in London by means of a French version in the "Histoires Tragiques." Above all, a similar tale of slander had been told in the second book of the "Faerie Queene," brought out about ten years previously. Nor can it be doubted that Shakespeare bore these works in mind as he wrote the play. Except in one or two particulars, such as the motive by which Don John is actuated in his villany, the

plot is substantially based upon that of the novel; the incident of the personation of Hero at the window by her maid-servant is taken direct from Ariosto, and an echo of the elevating moral deduced from the legend by Spenser seems to strike upon the ear as the scenes pass before us. Nevertheless, it may be doubted whether the dramatist's audience felt disappointed when the nature of the story became apparent. His "Much Ado About Nothing," I think, was to them an old acquaintance in a new and fascinating guise. Not only is its graver interest deepened by the nameless spirit we call genius — by a life and beauty peculiar to what he penned —but the underplot, the whole of which goes to the credit of his inventive power, belongs to the highest domain of comedy. For "Romeo and Juliet" he had created the irresistible Mercutio; in "Much Ado About Nothing," as though to vindicate his originality by similar means, he gives us characters without a prototype in any literature—Benedick, Beatrice, and Dogberry.

But little is known of the early history of "Much Ado" save that it was performed by Hemmings and his brother-players before James I. at Hampton Court in 1613, and that Will Kemp, "that most comical and conceited cavalier, Monsieur de Kempe, Jest-monger and Vice-gerent General to the Ghost of Dick Tarlton," was a famous impersonator of the watchman. Like the best of Shakespeare's work, the comedy was to be terribly mutilated soon after the Restoration. In Davenant's "Law Against Lovers," produced at the Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre in 1662, Benedick and Beatrice are exhibited in juxtaposition to the hero and heroine of "Measure for Measure"! "A good play and well-performed," Mr. Pepys jots in his diary. In 1721, after having been laid aside for many years, "Much Ado About Nothing" was revived in its integrity at the same house, with Ryan and Mrs. Cross as Benedick and Beatrice. Its merits probably obtained a wide recognition, but irreverent hands were yet to be laid upon it. The Rev. James Miller, whose contributions to the stage were hissed down by the "Inns of Court wits" because he had exhibited the landlady of Dick's Coffee-house and her daughter on the stage in an unflattering light, "adapted" it under the title of "The Universal Passion," at the same time laying himself under an unacknowledged obligation for extra matter to Molière's "Princesse d'Elide," one of the pieces played at Versailles during the fêtes collectively termed the "Plaisirs

de l'Ile Enchantée." Joculo, a faint copy of the French dramatist's Moron, the court jester, was acted by Theophilus Cibber. Genest "cannot suppose that a play compiled from Shakespeare and Molière should be a bad one;" the "Universal Passion," as Mr. Dutton Cook has suggested, may be taken as a proof to the contrary. Thenceforward, apart from interpolated speeches—interpolations which, if they make the unskilful laugh, certainly make the judicious grieve—"Much Ado About Nothing" was not tampered with. Garrick and Mrs. Pritchard appeared in it to particular advantage. "Every scene between them," says Davies, "was a continued struggle for superiority, nor could the spectator determine to which of them the preference was due." Nay, according to another critic, this Beatrice was so good that the "uncharacteristic corpulence" of the actress was overlooked; as Churchill would have put it, she became "genteel." Murphy declares that when she resigned the part the comedy lost half its value, but a few years afterwards the loss was made good by the refined and perennially bewitching Mrs. Abington. By that time Benedick had come to be associated with the name of Henderson, who, if unable to suggest the soldier and the gentleman by his bearing, threw into his acting "a thousand little traits of whim and pleasantry." George III. liked the performance so well that he sent congratulations to the player from the royal box—a compliment never lightly bestowed by that monarch. Henderson's fame as Benedick, however, was to pale before that of Charles Kemble, perhaps the best representative of the character the stage has yet had. He brought to his task a chivalrous air, a fund of polished vivacity, a quick appreciation of wit and humour. In the words of Leigh Hunt, "his utterance of the grand final reason for marrying—'the world must be peopled'—with his hands linked behind him, a general elevation in his aspect, and a sort of look at the whole universe before him, as if he saw all the future generations that might depend upon his verdict, was a bit of the right masterly gusto—the true perception and relish of the thing." Mrs. Jordan had in the meantime played "dear Lady Disdain" with delightful briskness and espièglerie, as did Mrs. Nesbitt at a subsequent period. Unfortunately they were both wanting in delicacy—a charge which could not be brought against the Beatrices of Miss Fanny Kemble, Miss Helen Faucit, and Mrs. Charles Kean,

whatever else criticism may have said about them. During the last few years the comedy has gradually relaxed its hold of the stage, and nearly a decade has elapsed since it was last seen at a London theatre.

It is dangerous to predict anything without something like "foreknowledge absolute," but more than one feature of the approaching revival at the Lyceum may be anticipated with confidence by anyone acquainted with what has been accomplished there by and under the rule of Mr. Irving. We may be sure, for example, that an actor to whom the atmosphere of comedy is as congenial as that of tragedy will bring out with the best effect the spirit and humour of Benedick, besides clothing the performance with the graces of high breeding imparted to his Hamlet and Richard III. We may be sure that the Beatrice will be definite in conception, full of infectious gaiety, and entirely free from any taint of the shrewishness which, suggested in times of old by actresses unable to perceive how foreign it was to the warm-heartedness and refinement of the character, has led some ingenious commentators to augur the worst for Benedick's peace of mind after his marriage. We may be sure that no part in the play, however slight, will be inadequately filled, and that the ensemble of the acting will be marked by the completeness and harmony attained in the performances of "Romeo and Juliet." We may be sure that the scenery, taken as a whole, will form a striking picture of old Messina, especially as regards the streets, the harbour, and the cathedral. We may be sure that the costumes will bear a close resemblance to those worn by Sicilian gallants and dames in the first half of the sixteenth century, when, as some historical allusions in the first act will show, the incidents of "Much Ado About Nothing" are supposed by the dramatist to have occurred. Last, but not least, we may be sure that the sorry stuff added to the dialogue since the days of Garrick inclusive, and until now printed in the acting edition of the piece, will be disregarded by a manager who has had the courage to represent "Richard III." and "Romeo and Juliet" in accordance with the original text, and that a few scenes hitherto "omitted in representation" will be restored. In brief, it is not too much to expect that the reproduction will be wanting in none of the qualities needed to give a new lease of popularity to this long-neglected but intrinsically valuable play.

TO ELLEN TERRY.

PUPIL of Art, and Nature's favoured child,
Nature and Art have looked on her and smil'd.
To few 'tis given thus to intertwine
The two in one and each with each combine:
(An art of such deep artifice, that now
E'en Nature's self is sometimes forced to bow.
Still Nature, willing to assert her sense,
Joins with her sister and their pow'rs condense).
Her restless grace a fascination gives,
And every part she fills is charmed and lives:
Lives in her shape, with beauty thus endowed,
Who would not act a part to be allowed
A moment's intercourse with one so fair?
Grace in her form, distinction in her air!
Tears, smiles, and laughter, each to each give place,
Raised by the magic of that mobile face.
See where she beckons with expressive hand,
The other raised in gesture of command.
Persuasive pow'r which holds imperious sway,
Charmed, yet commanded, we perforce obey;
Follow emotion as she plays the strings
Of sorrow, humour, mirth, and on the wings
Of fancy borne, by fascination led,
Pour forth the homage which her charms have bred.
'Twere hard to say whether we weep or smile,
The one is made the other to beguile.
Should a small fault attract censorious eyes
A living grace the dying fault supplies.
Yet, no, she should not without faults appear,
Her faults—if faults they be—serve but t'endear.
The splendid nullity of perfect rules,
The icy regularity of schools,
Would only fetter here where else they guide,
Her keen perceptions may not so be tied.
The cloak of genius on her shoulders falls,
By this, mechanical perfection palls,
Thus let her tread the boards to glad man's sight,
A beautifying spirit of delight.

N. T. Beard.

MISS ALMA MURRAY.

(See Photographic Frontispiece.)

MISS ALMA MURRAY, the daughter of the late Leigh Murray, was born in London, and made her first appearance on the stage, when quite a child, at the Olympic Theatre in 1869, under the management of the late Mrs. Liston, as Sacharissa in Mr. W. S. Gilbert's whimsical allegory, "The Princess." From 1869 to 1875 she acted various small parts at Drury Lane, and at the Olympic, the Royalty, and the Adelphi theatres. From August, 1875, to April, 1877, she was engaged in the provinces by Mr. H. M. Pitt and Mr. F. Glover, playing such characters as Rose Cudlip in "Forgiven," Lottie in "Two Roses," Kate Garston in "The Lancashire Lass," Constance Howard in "False Shame," Gertrude in "The Little Treasure," and Clara Douglas in "Money." Miss Murray reappeared in London at Drury Lane Theatre, in September, 1877, as Alice Bridgenorth in the first performance of Mr. W. G. Wills's play, "England in the Days of Charles II." From October, 1877, to February of the year following, Miss Murray was engaged at the Adelphi Theatre, where she acted Eliza in "After Dark," and Edith Burrowes in "Formosa." During a part of 1879, she appeared in the provinces as Esther Eccles in "Caste," and, in June of the same year, as Julie de Mortemar in Mr. Irving's revival of "Richelieu" at the Lyceum Theatre. Miss Murray remained at the Lyceum for nearly two years, and in the autumn of 1881 she went to fulfil an engagement at the Vaudeville. She is still at that theatre, where she has represented the following characters: Ivy Hope in "The Half-Way House," Mrs. Falkner in "Marriage Bells," Maria in "The School for Scandal," Grace Harkaway in "London Assurance," Sophia in "The Road to Ruin," and Georgina and Clara Douglas in "Money." Besides the above parts, Miss Alma Murray has also acted Daisy White in "Daisy's Escape," Ruby Horncastle in "Bygones," Annette in "The Bells," and Portia in "The Merchant of Venice."

THE THEATRE. Nº 34. THIRD SERIES.

You know me now.

"Money" Act 5 Sc. 3

Alma Murray

IN PERMANENT PHOTOGRAPHY BY THE LONDON STEREOSCOPIC COMPANY, 54, CHEAPSIDE.

JUSQU'À DEMAIN!

TO-DAY I've seen my darling with the eyes,
Her tears of joy fell upon either cheek;
"Give me," she said, "that love that never dies;
Come kiss it me like that; don't speak, don't speak."
As yet no frost to kill, no flow'r to die,
I walked on air as I went dreaming home,
For she had murmur'd with her parting sigh:
"Let there be harvest-time—to-morrow come!
To-morrow come!"

Can there be harvest-time without the seed?
Did ever summer burn without a spring?
"Oh, thou of little faith," she said, "indeed
There shall be flower-time and blossoming!
Reach out your hand; touch underneath my heart.
Oh, there are miracles of love for some.
Give me one kiss, the last, and then depart;
Dream all the night, and then—to-morrow come!
To-morrow come!"

C. S.

Our Musical-Box.

AS far as performances, public or private, of music in this metropolis are concerned, the divine art is decidedly at a discount during the months of September and October. Those who delight in being "moved by concords of sweet sounds" must, and as a rule do, seek them in the provinces or on the Continent. In England, the cathedral cities and Birmingham have it all their own way, musically speaking, at autumn-tide; and persons who, like myself, are due six days of seven in some particular London street throughout the off-season, cannot steal a chance of attending the productions of sacred and other novelties that invariably come off at this time of year in places far beyond the compulsory Cockney's ken. Since I filled my last "Box" a month ago with somebody else's account of "Parsifal," I have not heard any music save that which is gratuitously disseminated by the barrel-organ, the Salvation Army, and the Demon-Boy who makes propaganda for music-hall lays in his strident way, and will by no means suffer me to remain in blissful ignorance of the latest vulgar ineptitude with which Jolly What's-his-name convulses crowded audiences nightly at half-a-dozen emporia of vocal talent. I feel that, for years to come, I could go on living all the more happily for being unfamiliar with—nay, totally ignorant of—every bar of "I'm keepin' 'em all for 'Liza!" or of "Over the Garden Wall." But the Demon-Boy will not have it so, wherefore I am constrained to know these lays by heart, entirely against my will, and no little to the lowering of my spirits.

* * * * *

If, however, during St. Partridge's month I have not heard any music worthy of the name, I have at least read one of the most entertaining books about music that have been published for many a year—the memoirs of Felice Romani, the eminent poet and prince of Italian librettists, by his widow, Emilia Romani, née Branca. The "Lives and Adventures" of several great composers, with whom Romani maintained social relations of extreme intimacy, and for whom he wrote the text of their most renowned com-

positions, are delightfully told in this work, as well as those of its titular hero. Signora Romani affords to her readers countless instructive peeps into the past of the lyric drama, from the days of Simon Mayr—the founder of the modern Italian operatic school—to those of Meyerbeer, who prepared the way for Richard Wagner and the faction of "Endless Melodists," who lord it over our opera-houses and concert-rooms at the present time. Old Simon Mayr, indeed, it was who discovered, or, as Romani himself was wont to say, "invented" the Genoese poet as long ago as 1812, in which year the maëstro had been commissioned to write an opera called "The White and Red Roses" for the Teatro Agostino. The text supplied to him was of such wretched quality that he could not make up his mind to set it to music, and, after hunting about for some time for a poet whom he might safely entrust with the task of re-writing it, lit by accident upon young Romani, a law-student who had already written two or three charming libretti under a feigned name. Romani succeeded so well with this ungrateful job that Mayr, being requested the following year to compose a new opera for the San Carlo at Naples, invited the youthful librettist to stay with him at Bergamo until "their joint work" should be completed. This work turned out to be "Medea in Corinth," Mayr's operatic masterpiece, and the source of great honour and glory to Romani, whose text earned him the sobriquet of "Metastasio Redivivo." These collaborateurs subsequently produced "Atar" for Genoa, "The Two Duchesses" for the Scala (Milan), and "Danao" for the Argentina (Rome). Shortly after their co-operation came to a close, Romani became librettist-in-chief to Bellini; but the friendship between himself and Mayr endured to the latter's death in 1845 at the great age of eighty-five.

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Bellini came to Milan for the first time in 1827, and was introduced to Romani by Mercadante. He brought with him, moreover, letters of introduction from Zingarelli, the director of the Naples Conservatoire, and Barbaja, the impresario of both San Carlo and Scala, who had commissioned the youthful composer to write an opera for the latter theatre. The public of Milan was at that time not over-considerate towards beginners, being accustomed to see the works of approved masters produced in its famous theatre. But when such a celebrity as Romani offered to

write a libretto for the new comer, and make no charge for it, Milan made up its mind that there must be something in young Bellini, and gradually became strongly predisposed in his favour. "Il Pirata" was the first joint production of Romani and Bellini. The latter was then an ingenuous and uncommonly good-looking stripling, utterly ignorant of the world and unacquainted with the conventions of society. He was so careless in his dress, that Romani, who knew and valued the importance of outward appearances, was never weary of urging him to conform to the fashions of the day. He had come up to Milan in the uniform of the Naples Conservatoire—a hideous green tunic, with brass buttons and a red collar—and was thus arrayed at the last orchestral rehearsal, when, in a state of ungovernable excitement, he was rushing about the theatre declaiming and singing, until at last he threw his arms round Romani's neck, gasped out "Protector! Friend! Brother!" and burst into tears. Upon this Romani led him up to the pier-glass in the green-room, and said to him quietly: "My dear good Bellini, listen to me. Do you really intend to take your place at the pianoforte before the public in this grotesque costume?" Bellini stammered out something about "it being too late to provide other clothes," ran his hands through his magnificent golden locks, and executed a complacent pirouette. But Romani was not to be put off, and actually supplied Bellini with garments from his own wardrobe, wherein the maëstro might make his first appearance before the Milanese public in respectable guise.

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A quaint souvenir of Rubini is attached to the very rehearsal of the "Pirata" above alluded to. Acting was notoriously never the illustrious tenor's forte, and Romani very justly attached great importance to the dramatic interpretation of his admirable plays. Observing that Rubini was singing his part (Gualterio) with his hands in his pockets, the poet fell into a violent passion, and began to shout: "What do you mean by that? Pull yourself together and act, will you!" Rubini lazily lifted both arms. "No, no; not like that! Get angry! Take one step backwards! Let your voice reveal emotion! Don't make a fool of yourself! Betray your indignation! Now, stride forward with threatening gestures! No, not like that!" At last Rubini strode up to him, quite out of patience, and exclaimed: "Will you be quiet! Whom

do you take me for, then?" "For a dolt!" shrieked Romani, foaming with rage. Far from taking the poet's frankness ill, Rubini shrugged his shoulders and laughed, muttering to himself, "This angry fellow is perhaps not so far wrong, after all!"

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The next work of Romani and Bellini, "Bianca and Fernando," was expressly composed for the opening of the Carlo Felice (Genoa) in 1828. The following year witnessed the production of their third artistic offspring, "La Straniera," which had caused poor Bellini much bitter anxiety during its gestation, for Romani fell seriously ill shortly after commencing the libretto. Time pressed, and the manager recommended the poet Rossi to Bellini as a substitute for Romani. "If it must be so," wrote Bellini to an intimate friend, "I shall be driven to despair, for, good librettist as Rossi is, he cannot make such verses as Romani can, and I am peculiarly dependent upon my words. You can see in the 'Pirata' how the verses, not the dramatic situations, have inspired my talent." This sentence is a revelation with respect to Bellini's style of composition, and enables us to understand why he always relied upon melody for his great effects, and even wound up his operas with arie instead of morçeaux d'ensemble. He often required the text to be altered at the eleventh hour, much to Romani's perplexity and vexation. This was the case with the finale of the "Straniera," the words of which Romani could not for a long time write to please him. After several fruitless attempts, Romani exclaimed in a tone of vehement irritation: "I must confess that I do not understand your thought, or, indeed, what it is you want of me." "What I want!" rejoined Bellini. "I want a thought containing in itself a prayer, a curse, a threat, and a delirium—something like this;" and, sitting down to the piano, he played and sang his "thought" to the poet, concluding with the ejaculation, "That is what I want!" "And here are the words to it," rejoined Romani, handing him some verses he had scribbled off whilst Bellini was singing. "Will these do for you at length?" And they did.

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It was also in 1829 that the collaborateurs were entreated to consecrate an opera to the opening of the new Grand Ducal Theatre at Parma. "Zaira," their fourth joint work, was the outcome of this request. It was launched with the impressive predicate of "Lyric Tragedy," but failed to please the Parma public for all that.

One of Romani's experiences in Parma takes us straight back to the "good old times." The wearing of beards was just then strictly prohibited in the duchy, as well as in many another petty Italian State. Romani was the proud possessor of an uncommonly bushy and long pair of whiskers, for which he entertained a tender and abiding affection. Upon his arrival in Parma he was received with all imaginable honour. Nobody took the least exception to his hirsute adornments. On the evening of the third day after his advent, however, as he strolled into a café after rehearsal, accompanied by several acquaintances, a gentleman of the most exquisite manners accosted him, paid him several handsomely-turned compliments upon his genius and achievements, and wound up by blandly intimating to him that "every foreigner after completing a three days' residence in Parma, was bound to comply with the ordinances of constituted authority." "I," answered Romani, "am more than willing to do so. But what is the matter at issue?" "Excuse me, great poet," replied the bland gentleman, "but the matter at issue is your beard, which you will this very evening have to sacrifice to the barber." "My beard! What crime has my innocent beard committed?" "Up to the present moment, none. But the foreigner's right to exhibit himself in Parma streets with a beard on his face only lasts three days, and in your case that period will soon have expired." Romani smiled, pulled out his watch, looked at it, and observed: "Fortunately, I have still time to save my beard by quitting Parma without further delay. I am off!" These words were listened to with consternation by all present. The Duchess herself had expressed a wish that Romani might be present at the opening of her theatre. What was to be done? On the one hand the ordinance was explicit; on the other, Romani was inflexible. Suddenly a brilliant idea struck Count Stefano Sanvitale. He entreated the poet to put off his departure for twenty-four hours, guaranteeing immunity to his beard during the interim, and succeeded in tranquillising the perturbed spirits of the by-standers. Parma, which for a few minutes had been on the brink of a revolution, went quietly to bed; and early next morning Her Highness the reigning Duchess Maria Luigia published a State Decree authorising "the Signor Felice Romani, author and poet, born in Genoa, residing in Milan, to wear his beard within the territorial frontiers of her ducal domains." Count Sanvitale had contrived to obtain the doomed beard's full and free pardon during

the night, and the performance of "Zaira," which had hung, so to speak, upon a hair, took place in due course, under the superintendence and direction of both the authors of its being—the bearded Romani and beardless Bellini.

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Rossini came to Florence in the year 1853 with the avowed resolve of settling down there. He was at that time extremely irritable and melancholy, and appeared to be lapsing into a condition of chronic hypochondria. The Romanis and their cousins the Juvas, for all of whom Maëstro Gioachino entertained the liveliest regard, visited him the following year in the Tuscan capital, and were received by him with extravagant demonstrations of rejoicing. "Heaven has sent you hither, my dear friends," said his wife to Mesdames Romani and Juva, in confidential talk with those ladies, "to enliven Rossini; he is terribly out of sorts. You know how his imagination carries him away; he thinks himself much worse than he really is. Try to cheer him up, Perhaps you may succeed in reconciling him with music. He admires you greatly, and will not be able to resist you. I recommend him to your management. Coax him, embrace him above all flatter him desperately; and let Romani make him laugh!" When Madame Rossini-Pelissier talked about "reconciling Rossini to music" she hit off the secret source of his malady. Just about that time he had quite fallen out with music, and would—at least so he assured all his friends—have nothing more to do with it. One day, as an Austrian military band was playing under his window with admirable spirit and correctness, he shut himself up in his bedroom and stopped his ears with his fingers. The band, however, was performing a selection from "Nabuco"; and Verdi's music, then rising rapidly in popular favour, was poison to Rossini's ears. Had the "Kaiserlicks" been playing an arrangement of "Semiramide," of "William Tell," or of the "Barbiere," Rossini would have flung his windows wide open and listened to every note, his countenance irradiated by smiles. He could not, however, bear any competitor for musical renown, and the triumph that Meyerbeer had but just achieved with "Robert Le Diable" kept him sleepless for many a night. "Tell" had been withdrawn from the Parisian Grand Opera to make room for "Robert." Rossini could not get over so deadly a humiliation. Bellini's

successes had caused him grievous pain; the popularity of Donizetti (whom he always spoke of contemptuously as "a copyist") seemed to turn his blood into gall; but his direst pangs were due to young Verdi, whose music he would not listen to, and whose name he did not allow to be pronounced in his presence. Rossini's spirits were fairly crushed by Verdi's achievements. He was wont to say, "The world has forgotten me," and to pace his room for hours at a stretch, clutching his head in both hands, and exclaiming, "Anybody else in my position would kill himself! But I—I am a miserable coward, and dare not do it."

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On the occasion above referred to, Rossini asked his visitors to dine with him. At table he was in an excellent humour, and overflowed with anecdote, as did Romani, one of the best raconteurs of his day. Time passed away, the evening was drawing in; Romani had more than once actually succeeded in making Rossini laugh aloud; Madame Rossini, exulting in the happy result of her instructions, threw open the door of the drawing-room in which the piano was standing, and in which, by her special order, not a single candle had been lighted. Then the beautiful Matilda Juva put forth all her blandishments to induce "Papa Maëstro," as she was wont to designate her venerated teacher, to take his place at the instrument and accompany her in the romanza from "Otello," which she had formerly studied with him. He stipulated for darkness, and consented. Meanwhile, a few intimate friends had dropped in, Prince Poniatowski, Counts Zappa and Ricci, the painter Vincenzo Rasori, and a young foreign pianist, then studying counterpoint in Florence. Rossini sat down to the piano, and began to improvise upon the "Willow, willow" theme with extraordinary freedom and richness of treatment. Presently, turning his head towards Matilda Juva, who was standing close behind him, he exclaimed, "Now it is your turn, dear Desdemona." She sang the romanza so purely and passionately that, before its last note had left her lips, Rossini broke into convulsive weeping and sobbed like a beaten child. He soon recovered command of himself, however, and begged the gifted songstress to sing the cavatina from "Semiramide," which she joyfully consented to do, only expressing the fear that she should not be able to

remember it perfectly. "And yet, beloved Matildina," rejoined Rossini, "you must sing it without the notes, for I will not have a light in the room. I will prompt you!" Her rendering of the cavatina delighted him immeasurably; he kissed her hands, cheeks, and lips, over and over again, paying her the most extravagant compliments. "Now," ejaculated the bystanders in chorus, "is Rossini once more reconciled with music!"

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Just then Madame Rossini remembered the young pianist, whom she knew to be consumed with a longing to be listened to by her illustrious husband. She called for lights, and as soon as they were brought begged her youthful guest "to play them something." He began an elaborate fantasia, but had hardly got well into the introduction when she exclaimed, loud enough to be heard by all present, "What a clumsy blunderer!" rose from her place, crossed the room to the piano, and laid her hand upon his shoulder, saying: "Do excuse me, but I see that Rossini is in pain. He has got one of his nervous attacks. Pray stop playing. Later on . . . another time . . . we shall be delighted if you will favour us." The luckless pianist, who had no idea what was the matter, and had been looking forward to eliciting applause from Rossini, sat on his music-stool in dumb bewilderment. He could not have foreseen what a baleful effect would be produced upon the maëstro by the morçeau of his choice—a fantasia upon airs from "Nabuco"! Romani, however, contrived to exorcise the spirit of Verdi by his sallies and lazzi; the candles were extinguished, and the evening finished as gaily as it had begun.

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Donizetti, as enthusiastic an admirer of Romani's verses as Bellini himself, was one of the librettist's most attached and intimate friends. None of his musical rivals composed as rapidly as he. With him, conception and execution were simultaneous. His opera, "L'Elisir d'Amore," was a phenomenon of swift production. One day the impresario of the Teatro Canobbiano in Milan came to him in deep despair. He had announced a new opera to his clients and the public at large, and his composer had left him in the lurch. His position was a critical one, and he implored Donizetti to look up some old operatic score and dress it up afresh for the occasion. "You must be joking," was the

reply; "it is by no means a habit of mine to polish up old rubbish. We have a fortnight before us—quite time enough wherein to write a new opera. I promise you one, if Romani will consent." Romani did consent, and a fortnight later, on the 13th May, 1833, the first performance of the "Elisir" took place. Whilst he was composing this opera, he accepted an invitation to dine with the Branca family, and did not turn up until dinner was over. After apologising for his unpunctuality, he added: "I was obliged to call upon Romani to see whether or not he had anything for me, and he gave me the text of a whole duet. As I was reading his verses the music suggested itself to me, and I was of course compelled to make a sketch of it. Here it is, as you see," producing a manuscript; "this evening I shall arrange it for the instruments, and hand it over to the copyists." He was fond of saying that "all his work was done by steam," and could never be persuaded but that his ideas, whilst he was composing, emanated from one side or the other of his head, according to the character of the composition. "When," he would insist, "I have got comic music in my head, I feel a disagreeable knocking upon the left side of my forehead; when I am about grave music, on the right temple. Great heat accompanies the knocking; but it all goes off as soon as I have written down the composition."

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Shortly after Romani's nomination to the Professorship of Fine Arts at Genoa, he made the acquaintance of Meyerbeer by accident, whilst travelling for pleasure through Germany, and soon contracted a close friendship with the brilliant young Berliner, who carried him off to "Athens on the Spree," and there made him known to Weber, Vogler, and many other eminent German musicians of the day. The intimacy of these two remarkable men increased until they became inseparables. They had many characteristics in common; amongst others, extravagant superstitiousness. Meyerbeer's belief in the supernatural was absolute. He saw ghosts, was tormented by visions, and was subject to hallucinations. Romani also believed in spirits and apparitions of all kinds. One night, during a pleasure-trip they were taking together, Romani was sleeping soundly, but dreaming as usual of ghosts and goblins, when a cold touch woke him up suddenly, and he saw, standing by his bedside, a white exiguous figure holding an extinguished tallow-candle in its hand. Only half

awake, he at first thought it was a genuine apparition, and gasped out, shuddering from head to foot: "Who is it? What seekest thou?" "It is I," replied his German comrade in a voice tremulous with terror; "I want to light my candle, for over there," pointing towards his room, "I am forbidden to remain in the dark. Something is all the time whispering in my ear: 'Light the candle—light the candle!'" Cold shivers ran down Romani's back at this awful statement, but he manfully strove to cheer up his friend, whose candle he promptly lit. Nothing, however, would induce Meyerbeer to return to his room. "Let me sleep with you," he entreated Romani; but that was impossible, for the bed was barely large enough to accommodate one person. Romani put on his clothes, and advised Meyerbeer to follow his example. Arm-in-arm, and both carrying lighted candles, they proceeded into the "haunted room," collected Meyerbeer's garments, and proceeded to search for ghosts in fear and trembling. Finally they drew two chairs up to the bedside, rested their feet upon them, piled up all their pillows against the wall, and got off to sleep side by side, stretched athwart Romani's bed.

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Later in life Meyerbeer got a little the better of his superstitiousness and pusillanimity, but could never quite shake either off. He was cast into an agony of apprehension just before the production of "Robert," by a fortune-teller who prophesied a triple fall to that work; nor was his rapture of joy less remarkable when the vaticination was realised to the letter by three of the chief singers tumbling down accidentally on the stage during the first performance—a mishap which in no way interfered with the absolute and triumphant success of the opera. He was a dreadfully nervous man, and influenced by impulses for which he himself could not in the least account. For instance, his antipathy towards cats was ungovernable and incurable. He felt their presence when he could not see them. During his sojourn in Italy he was lodging upon one occasion with Romani in a country inn. The friends occupied one room, in which it need scarcely be observed several lights were kept burning brightly all night long to intimidate the ghosts. About midnight Meyerbeer suddenly uttered a horrible yell, awaking Romani, who tremulously called out: "What's the matter?" doubtless fearing that some apparition was hovering around. "There's a cat here!" screamed Meyerbeer; "come and

drive her out!" Romani looked about, but at first saw nothing. Presently, however, peeping under Meyerbeer's bed, he espied a harmless necessary cat, curled up in placid slumber. Being very fond of cats, he proposed to take grimalkin to bed with him, whereupon Meyerbeer fell into convulsions, and never ceased screeching, "Out with her! out with her! Strike her dead!" until the poet opened the door and put pussy gently out of the room, when the composer immediately went off to sleep again as though nothing unusual had happened.

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Romani wrote two libretti for Meyerbeer, "Margherita d'Angio" and "L'Esule di Granata." Both operas were produced at the Scala, and very favourably received by the exigeant Milanese public. Meyerbeer's opinion of Romani as a librettist was so high that, when he was commissioned to compose the "Crociato," he would only accept the poet Rossi's text under the condition that it should be handed over to Romani to do what he might please with it in the way of revision and alteration. When Meyerbeer left Italy, the friends did not meet again until after the production of the "Huguenots." Meanwhile, Meyerbeer had taken Europe by storm with his "Robert," about which Donizetti prophetically remarked: "Should this sort of music take root amongst us, farewell Italian music, farewell for ever!" A curious revelation respecting one project of Meyerbeer that was never realised, is disclosed to us by Madame Romani apropos of her husband's meeting with the great composer in Paris. It seems that some time before that encounter, being at Spa for his health, Meyerbeer had received the visit of a Signor Davide Levi, who conveyed to him affectionate greetings from Romani, and had confided to this gentleman that he had made a vow to terminate his career as a composer with an Italian opera. "My theatrical life," he said, "began in Italy; I would fain end it with Italian melodies." "He wishes," wrote Levi to Romani, "above all that you should write his text, for he declares that music lurks in the poetry of Romani." Levi told Meyerbeer that Romani wished to write a libretto with Spartacus for its hero, as that subject would just suit the public temper in Italy, then preparing to fight for her independence. "It would also," Levi observed, "come very well and fitly after the 'Huguenots;' Rossini closed his lengthy operatic repertoire with 'William Tell,' and you may

as worthily terminate yours with 'Spartacus.'" This suggestion was under discussion, often and at great length, between Romani and Meyerbeer at Paris; but it was eventually dropped on account of the dearth of great singers. The best vocal artists had grown old, and hardly any of the young ones exhibited hopeful symptoms of greatness to come. Meyerbeer and Romani seem to have made up their minds that the art of vocalisation had fallen into irreparable decay, and upon that ground abandoned their pet scheme. Thus it came to pass that Meyerbeer's last opera was written to a French instead of to an Italian libretto, and bears the name, not of "Spartaco," but of "L'Africaine." The two friends died within a year of one another—Meyerbeer in 1864, Romani barely twelve months later.

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The above desultory gleanings from a rich harvest of musical and dramatic anecdote, for which the artistic public of Europe has to thank Signora Romani, will I hope tempt many readers of The Theatre to peruse in its totality one of the most entertaining books of our day.

Wm. Beatty-Kingston.

AUJOURD'HUI.

SOFTLY fell the sunlight o'er the mountain,
Sweetly bloomed the lilies by the way,
Tender was thy kiss beside the fountain—
That was yesterday.

Safely in the warmth of summer singing,
Clearly said the thrush that love would stay,
All my soul to thine seemed fondly clinging—
That was yesterday.

Cold! blows the wind across the mountain,
Faded! are the lilies by the way,
No kiss, no song, all silent is the fountain—
'Tis to-day.

Ayrd Whyte.

Our Play-Box.

SINCE I returned from abroad I have made it my business to pay a visit to every theatre of importance that was open; to melodramatic theatres, to comic theatres, and to theatres playing the ordinary jog-trot business; and the conclusion I have arrived at is that the public taste is changing, and that managers will be wise who quickly anticipate the inevitable. Two forms of entertainment are certainly doomed: realistic melodrama and that hybrid production commonly known as a French-farcical play. I do not think that the public is weary of melodrama, or disinclined to laugh at any exaggerated form of comedy. But the managers have been a little too greedy, and have killed the goose with the golden eggs. Melodrama has ceased to be alluring; and farcical plays have stopped short of being funny. The most successful managers have made fortunes, and have mistaken the skimmed milk of public opinion for genuine cream. It was impossible that such a state of things should last. Having done a battle, a burning house, a railway accident, and a wretched man tumbling from a scaffold, what more was there to do? These sensations did not arise legitimately out of the plan and the purpose of the piece; they were written up to, the plays were founded upon them instead of their coming out of the play. They were as hollow and as insincere as poems that are written up to pictures.

It is a distinctly wrong way of doing work. I do not deny that I have written poems up to pictures. I have done so hundreds of times. Many a magazine-editor has sent me a "cut" late at night, and implored me to be inspired over it, and to send him the result by the first post in the morning. I have done it to the best of my ability; but it has not been so good as work originally conceived and executed. These sensation plays are relatively just as faulty. The scene-painter and machinist are first considered, then the dramatist. He, like the verse-maker, writes up to the picture. But these are not the plays that live. They are ephemeral, transitory, "light things and slight." Sick of

wholesome sensation, the managers have tried brutality as an alternative, and that, happily, has had a short life and a merry one. I should not be surprised if romantic dramas were to have an innings, with a touch of history in them, if not overdone—plays, I mean, of the "Monte Christo" and "Duke's Motto" order; fanciful and artistic plays; plays of mixed romantic and weird interest, like the "Two Orphans;" or daring attempts at such a fine work as Sardou's "Patrie," which has never yet been seen as it ought to be seen, and has a small fortune at its back. It is as good a play as has been written in the last half-century, and if Mr. Irving were ever inclined to revive melodrama, and would take it in hand at the Lyceum, with correct costumes and dresses, he playing the Duke of Alva, Miss Ellen Terry, Dolores, and Mr. Terriss, Rysoor, the whole of London would go to see it. There is no period of history so fascinating to an Englishman. There is no book more popular with the casual reader than "Motley's History of the Netherlands." "Patrie," the neglected play, is that brilliant and stirring book in action.

Before, then, I begin my record of the past, I must give my prophecy of the future, and that is emphatically this: No more vulgarity, no more sensation, no more brutality; but romantic drama at the big houses, and domestic drama at the small ones. To lead both we have two experienced actors at hand, and dozens to follow them. I believe Mr. Henry Neville to be as good a romantic actor as can now be found. I believe Mr. David James to be the real maker of domestic drama of the future. Fit one and fit the other, and there stands a fortune; but then they want to be fitted.

Talking of prophecy leads me on to Mrs. Langtry, who, as I expected she would, has fully come up to the expectation of sober-minded and conscientious critics. The story of this lady is worth telling as far as it goes.

I remember well the morning when Mrs. Langtry first appeared at the Haymarket, in the character of Miss Hardcastle. She had friends in front, of course, as is the universal rule when any new actress appears, or when anyone, male or female, takes an important step in life. There was nothing strange or wonderful in that, though ignorant and spiteful people have endeavoured to make so much of it. It was necessary to prepare the mind for such a performance, to rid it of all prejudice, to see and judge for oneself, and to close one's ears to all the silly chatter

and cackle of the "friends of the profession." I, for one, did not go into that theatre holding a brief for or against Mrs. Langtry; I tried to be just, and I knew I was interested. I waited to see what I should see, and I heard many, who ought to have known better, condemning Mrs. Langtry before she opened her mouth. I must own that I was agreeably surprised. I have seen many amateurs, but never one so promising. She had great natural gifts, a winning voice, confidence, and a graceful bearing. She had just the stuff of which good actresses are made. Her success, such as it was, struck me as entirely impartial. There was little applause, and no effusive enthusiasm. To have condemned Mrs. Langtry, on that first hearing, as an actress of no capability or promise, would have been a sign of ignorance or partiality.

There were newspapers, to their shame be it said, who, knowing better, and having on their staff experienced judges of acting, did their utmost to laugh Mrs. Langtry off the stage. She appeared for the benefit of the Theatrical Fund, and they ridiculed her for that. They said there was not an amateur at St. George's Hall who would not play the part better. They affirmed she was not an actress, and never would be one. In order to curry favour with the theatrical profession, there were men cruel and cowardly enough to attempt to crush a lady of taste and refinement who desired to be an actress. This cuckoo-cry became popular. It was taken up by hundreds who had never seen Mrs. Langtry play Miss Hardcastle, and defiantly declared they never intended to do so. At that time, if ever I ventured to say that there was promise and considerable talent in the lady, I was hounded down. It was safer not to open my lips than to discuss the matter. It was egregious folly; it was bad taste; the success, if it was one, came from toadies and flatterers, or from fools. Was there ever such a thing heard of as the successful first appearance of a raw novice?

I instanced the case of Miss Neilson, having seen her play Juliet at the Royalty, when just fresh from Mr. Ryder's hand; but to praise Mrs. Langtry was to hold a red rag to a bull. When, to add insult to injury, Mr. Bancroft actually engaged Mrs. Langtry to play Blanche Haye in "Ours," the profession and its organs became rabid. It was an insult to art, and Heaven only knows what besides. The last bit of ground of argument had been cut from the feet of the enemy. They abused the novice because she had played "the

lead" for a charity; what harm could there possibly be in her taking a subordinate character when she joined the ranks of the profession? This home-truth irritated the enemy still more. They knew they were wrong, and were vexed because they had been proved to be wrong. Mrs. Langtry played Blanche Haye very fairly indeed: with far more promise, as I think, than she had played Miss Hardcastle. The critics, who had previously injured her, now insulted her. They compared her, as a show, to Sir Roger Tichborne, or the Greek "tattooed nobleman," and they had the effrontery to state that she was not an actress, and never would be one. All this time the public judged for themselves, and followed the lead of the more temperate critics. It was not great acting, but acting of a wholesome, honest, and refreshing kind. Mrs. Langtry could, at any rate, speak the Queen's English; she understood the use of the aspirate; she was not deplorably ignorant how to move with ease, or to comport herself as a lady. She had to appear as a well-bred woman, and, at any rate, it was not any effort to her. She was giving the kind of lesson to the profession that it wanted, and this did not make her any the more popular. The public supported her, and that made her enemies more savage than ever. Her London engagement was a strong pecuniary success; her provincial engagement was phenomenal. On this Mrs. Langtry was offered an engagement in America, and she accepted it.

She has now appeared on the eve of her departure in the character of Hester Grazebrook in "The Unequal Match," and shown so strongly the gain of practice, the possession of industry, and the gift of courage, that I should not be at all surprised to find her old enemies singing small, and her most determined opponents offering her their greasy adulation—a present that she must most heartily condemn. I should not be at all astonished to find that those who compared this student to the "tattooed nobleman" veered round like the wind, and found a good deal to admire in one they ridiculed six months ago. For Mrs. Langtry has been wise in her generation, and has "offered the other cheek" to those who hit her hardest. She has taken no notice of the cruel, the ungenerous and hard things said of her, and has patiently waited her time for an inevitable reaction. If people like to eat their own words, it is no business of hers. She says nothing, but, I doubt not, thinks a good deal.

"AN UNEQUAL MATCH."

A Comedy in Three Acts, by the Late Tom Taylor.

Originally produced at the Haymarket Theatre on Saturday, November 7th, 1877.
Re-produced at the Imperial Theatre on Saturday, September 16th, 1882.

	HAYMARKET.	IMPERIAL.
Harry Arncliffe	Mr. William Farren ...	Mr. J. G. Grahame.
Blenkinsop	Mr. Compton	Mr. J. G. Taylor.
Sir Sowerby Honeywood ...	Mr. Chippendale	Mr. J. W. Pigott.
Capt. Loftus Chillingham ...	Mr. Braid	Mr. M. R. Selten.
Boerhaave Botcherby	Mr. Buckstone	Mr. E. Shepherd.
Tofts...	Mr. Clark	Mr. E. W. Coleman.
Grazebrook	Mr. Rogers	Mr. H. Akhurst.
Herr Dummkoff	Mr. Coe	Mr. Weathersby.
Ober-Kelner	Mr. Weathersby	Mr. Arthur Weston.
Mrs. Topham Montressor ...	Mrs. Buckingham White	Miss Kate Pattison.
Bessie Hebblethwaite	Mrs. E. Fitzwilliam	Miss Kate Hodson.
Lady Honeywood...	Miss Lavine...	Miss Wolverton.
Miss Leech	Mrs. Coe	Miss Clare Douglas.
Hester Grazebrook	Miss Amy Sedgwick	Mrs. Langtry.

Objections have been made to Mrs. Langtry's view of Hester Grazebrook, the rustic girl amongst her cows and milk-pails, whose innocence and purity, whose affectionate nature and simplicity, win the heart of her future husband, who is at any rate a man of the world. She treats it ideally, and gets as much poem as she can out of the play. She makes Hester loveable; she strikes the proper key-note of interest. Suppose she had made Hester a dowdy wench with a strong accent—would she so have interested the spectators? I think not. It is the purpose of the play to secure our interest in Hester and to secure it soon. Now suppose for instance that Miss Ellen Terry had been cast to play Hester Grazebrook; do you not think that she would have idealised her as she once idealised Mary Meredith in "Our American Cousin?" Can you conceive Miss Terry playing Hester otherwise than poetically? I cannot. Would she not have dressed her like an old print, and made her more a china shepherdess than an earthern dairy-maid? Mrs. Langtry, by her treatment, won her audience at any rate, and her pretty ways and movements were a theme of universal admiration. She has more than a good voice—she knows how to use it. She has been taught not only what to speak but how to speak. Mrs. Langtry is ridiculed as an amateur, but I fearlessly ask where is the professional, save in a few instances, who so interests her audience in every word she speaks or who has so soon acquired, in addition to the grace of utterance, the art of listening. The scene is always alight when Mrs. Langtry is on it. The play never goes to sleep when she is

on the stage. The description of an idyllic love, and life with a new-found lover, could not have been spoken with such peculiar charm and artlessness by any actress on the stage, save and except Ellen Terry. It is downright nonsense to call such a performance amateurish. The second act makes a greater demand upon the resources of the actress. We have seen she can act; we have to see if she can feel. The first act of this play to me was perfectly natural; it charmed me. The actress seemed in her element. In the second act she had to crush a proud rival and to show her sorrow at the supposed loss of her husband's love. I am now criticising, I own, from a high standpoint, as I invariably do. I thought it all extremely clever, but not convincing. Mrs. Langtry acted this part admirably, but she did not seem to feel it. She spoke her words with admirable emphasis, but they did not appear to come from the heart. Before, she was not acting, but now she was. I wonder if, at the time, Mrs. Langtry put herself mentally in the position of a woman outraged and insulted? I don't think she did, and, until she does, she will never affect her audience. Until she can cry real tears she will never make real tears to come. Mrs. Kendal feels everything she does and every word she speaks, and so she affects her audience. A shrill theatrical scream to express emotion is worse than useless. Far better say nothing. If it is not in the actress's nature to scream, if she does not feel the part that way, she ought not to do it. Some women take their grief sullenly or with a choke or a sob. Mrs. Langtry was acting sorrow; she was not really grieved. I was disappointed here, when I own that others were charmed. It was theatrical and not sincere. But in the last act, one entirely of comedy, Mrs. Langtry was at her best again; finished, self-possessed, and altogether good, although the others dragged the play horribly, and, once or twice, almost brought it to a standstill.

Miss Kate Pattison will be most usefully employed during the American tour, and she has conspicuously improved. She has presence, distinction, and a fine comedy air. She plays Mrs. Montressor in a nice, broad, sweeping style, which comes refreshingly after the finicking ways of modern realistic comedy, as it is called, when men and women are as uninteresting as they are in real life. Miss Pattison not only dresses well, but knows how to wear her dresses, though she will excuse me for saying that one of them, though very beautiful—a lovely brocade

all over apple-blossom—is rather smart for the morning at a country house. Better comedy could not be shown than by Mr. J. G. Taylor as Blenkinsop, the "gentleman's gentleman," Miss Kate Hodson as Bessie Hebblethwaite, and Mr. J. W. Pigott as Sir Sowerby Honeywood. I am glad that the Americans will see all three, for they are characteristic specimens of our best and least-exaggerated school. I believe Mr. Pigott is a novice, but he plays like an old actor. Is he one of those to be condemned for "taking the bread out of the mouth" of the poor actor? Mr. H. Akhurst, as Grazebrook, gave another bit of excellent character.

It is pleasant to think what pleasant interchanges there are between this country and America. Scarcely a month passes that we do not send some actor or actress to America; never a theatrical season goes by without our making friends with some favourite of the American stage. As a rule, we see too little of American actresses. We have waited long and anxiously for Lotta; Miss Clara Morris is long overdue. The latest and most important arrival is Miss Fanny Davenport, who opened our London season at Mr. Toole's Theatre in a new version of the "Diane de Lys" of Alexandre Dumas.

"DIANE."

A new Play, in Five Acts, adapted from "Diane de Lys" of Alex. Dumas the Younger, by James Mortimer.

Produced at Toole's Theatre on Saturday, September 9th, 1882.

Count de Lys ... ... Mr. Hermann Vezin	Servant ... ... Mr. E. S. March.
Paul Aubry ... ... Mr. Eben Plympton.	Marchioness de Nercy Miss Eleanor Bufton
Viscount de Ternon Mr. Phillip Day.	Madame Delauny ... Miss Sophie Eyre.
Duke de Riva... ... Mr. H. Reeves Smith	Lydia ... ... Miss F. Worth.
Taupin ... ... Mr. Edmund Lyons.	Lisa ... ... Miss A. Hardinge.

Diane... ... ... Miss Fanny Davenport.

The story of this play can be told in a few words. A frivolous woman and childish wife, thinking that she is neglected by her husband, falls desperately in love with a penniless artist. The husband, who is after all a far better fellow than his wife is prepared to admit, discovers the intrigue, and consents to condone it on the condition that the guilty wife never sees her lover again. The husband makes no secret of what he will do if they ever meet in spite of this warning: he will shoot the lover like a dog. They do meet, and in shooting at the lover the husband accidentally kills his wife. This is not the end of the French play, but it has been so arranged in the English version apparently for the purpose of obtaining a sympathy for the wife or for giving the

actress a stage-fall, I cannot say which. It is not a judicious change, though otherwise Mr. Mortimer has done his work of condensation extremely well. His dialogue is neat, even, and to the point. He knows that English audiences hate talk, even if it be good, but what is to be done when, as in the case of "Diane de Lys," the play depends not on action but on good talk alone. It must fail to interest, I fear, as "Diane" most certainly did. The worst of it is that we have had no opportunity of seeing Miss Fanny Davenport at her best, for the play, and the part certainly, did not suit her fine figure and grand style. She is evidently an actress of great experience and considerable comedy power, and she would be better suited, I should say, to characters of wit, brightness, and good-nature, than of guilty wives who attempt to beget a morbid sympathy for their illicit lovers. The other members of the cast were as unfortunately circumstanced as Miss Fanny Davenport. Mr. Hermann Vezin did his utmost for the play, but had little chance of distinguishing himself, and the same may be said in a greater or less degree of Mr. Eben Plympton, the lover; Mr. Phillip Day, an excellent comedian; and Miss Sophie Eyre, a young actress of very great promise. I was very glad to see that Miss Eleanor Bufton had returned to work again, Miss Bufton of the silvery laugh. I remember that Mr. Walter Lacy once called her the Mrs. Nisbett of the modern stage.

It seems to me a great misfortune to the Criterion Theatre that Mr. Charles Wyndham has, owing to his engagement in America, been compelled to give up temporarily the direction of this merry little playhouse. For many a long year he has been the life and soul of the place, and has mainly supported a somewhat forced and hot-house entertainment. From this I do not at all mean to infer that the plays are one-part plays, or could ever have existed without an admirable company. I do not suppose there is a better all-round company to be found in London. Mr. Herbert Standing, Mr. George Giddens, Mr. Maltby, and Mr. Lytton Sothern have never made a mistake, so far as I can see. But Mr. Wyndham was the oil that greased the machinery.

The new play recently produced here will hardly bear comparison with its predecessors.

"LITTLE MISS MUFFET."

A new Comedy, in Three Acts, adapted from the French of "La Femme à Papa" by James Albery.

Produced at the Criterion Theatre on Saturday, September 2nd, 1882.

Sir Juan Trippetow	Mr. H. Standing.	Annie	Miss E. Vining.
Solon Trippetow ...	Mr. Beerbohm Tree.	Betsy...	Miss V. Melnotte.
Dr. Toddy Doles ...	Mr. A. Maltby.	Jane	Miss M. Scott.
Hon. Featherby Wing	Mr. Lytton Sothern	Susan	Miss K. Clyde.
Tigg	Mr. G. Giddens.	Fanny	Miss Agnes Hewitt.
Sumter	Mr. A. Redwood.	Charlotte	Miss Featherstone.
William	Mr. J. Grant.	Mabel	Miss Evelyn Evelyn
Simpkins	Master Norton.	Katie...	Mrs. Fitzroy.
Mrs. Darling	Miss Nelly Bromley	Lucy	Miss B. Barrington.
Mary...	Miss L. Lynd.	Mrs. Meaking... ...	Miss M. Mortimer.
		Minnie	... Miss Kate Rorke.

Mr. Albery has here attempted to Anglicise an essentially Parisian piece called "La Femme à Papa," a play that once became notorious owing to the acting of Madame Judic, and to her daring representation of an innocent girl who becomes accidentally intoxicated at a wedding-breakfast. It is not a nice notion, and Mr. Albery has got rid of it as best he could; but I am inclined to agree with the opinion of Mr. Godfrey Turner, expressed elsewhere, that when from these French farces have been eliminated the elements of bad taste that English audiences would not tolerate, there is very little left to amuse anybody. I am inclined to think that the day of these Criterion plays is over. It is a case of "toujours perdrix," and the public is satiated. The flippant husband who goes out on a spree during his wife's absence with a solemn and church-going friend is getting a bit of a bore, and his adventures are equally tedious. You may cut the cloth in a different fashion, but it is always the same kind of coat. But what an admirable company it is for any original comic-writer to fit. In addition to the names I have mentioned, there is now Mr. Beerbohm Tree and Miss Nelly Bromley, both far too good and intelligent to be wasting their time over these wire-drawn plays. I somehow wish that Mr. W. S. Gilbert would forget "Foggerty's Fairy," and write another eccentric comedy for the Criterion.

The Gaiety has produced another burlesque by Mr. R. Reece of the old familiar pattern, and by this time the Gaiety patrons have forgotten all about the little opposition on the first night to some acrobats and tumblers introduced to spin out the accustomed three acts of glittering fun.

The Theatre.—No. 36, Third Series. *Woodburytype.*

Mr. Farlow, if you please."

Kelly Grahame.

TTLE MISS MUFFIT.—Act iii.

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN SPECIALLY FOR THIS MAGAZINE BY THE ST. JAMES'S PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPANY, 72, PICCADILLY, W.

"LITTLE ROBIN HOOD."

A New Burlesque-Drama in Three Acts, by Robert Reece.
Produced at the Gaiety Theatre on Friday, September 15th, 1882.

Robert Fitzroth ... Miss E. Farren.	Hubert de la Plate... Mr. J. D'Auban.
Richard Cœur de Lion ... . Mr. A. Williams.	Sir William of the Lee Miss E. Broughton.
Baron Fitzwater ... Mr. T. Squire.	Sir John Little ... Miss Alice Gilbert.
King John ... ... Mr. Robert Brough.	Sir Guy of Gamwell Miss May Chester.
Sir Ralph Mount Faucon ... ... Miss P. Broughton.	Allan-a-Dale ... ... Miss Beale.
Friar Tuck ... ... Mr. J. J. Dallas.	Stukeley ... ... Miss Clevis.
	Sir Tristan ... ... Miss N. Handley.
	Maid Marian ... ... Miss C. Gilchrist.

I do not see much in this entertainment to separate it from its companions; but I have no doubt it amuses those for whose pleasure it has been prepared. For my own part I miss Mr. E. Terry, Mr. Royce, and Miss Kate Vaughan, the leading members of the Gaiety merry family, but Miss E. Farren remains, as good as ever, as young as ever, as attractive as ever, and in many respects the most remarkable artist on the English stage. When I go to the Alhambra and hear Miss Constance Loseby sing, and when I go to the Gaiety and see Miss Farren dance, I begin to disbelieve my own memory. Time plays as many pranks as Mr. Reece does with his puns, and the gentle old fellow puts his kindly hand on some fair heads, and then passes them by. But it is only women that he spares; why, indeed, should he have any consideration for men?

For the purpose of record, I append the particulars of a matinée at the Gaiety that attracted a good deal of attention, and was the means of bringing out two new plays by two new writers. New plays are not so numerous that we can afford to ignore them.

"AN OLD FLAME."

A Comedietta in One Act, adapted from the French by W. T. Blackmore.

Septimus Seabrook... Mr. Philip Beck.	Edwin Carrington... Mr. W. T. Blackmore
Mr. Busby ... ... Mr. Etienne Girardot	Minnie ... ... Miss Elsie Carew.

"BLACK, BUT COMELY."

A New Drama in Three Acts, adapted by Miss Stephanie Forrester, from the Nov of the same name by J. G. Whyte-Melville.

Produced at the Gaiety Theatre on Saturday Afternoon, September 16th, 1882.

Rev. Silas Tregarthen Mr. Etienne Girardot	Jericho Lee ... ... Mr. R. S. Boleyn.
Mervyn Strange ... Mr. Neville Doone.	Mrs. Tregarthen ... Miss Giffard.
James Paravant ... Mr. Philip Beck.	Lady Goneril ... ... Miss Elsie Carew.
Lord St. Moritz. Mr. A. C. Hatton.	Nance ... ... Miss E. Ormsby.
Zachary ... ... Mr. Charles Coote.	Jane Lee ... ... Miss S. Forrester.

Mr. W. T. Blackmore has written a merry little piece, and in

his quaint and apposite dialogue he shows a considerable sense of humour. I believe the play is founded on an old French farce, "Le Passé de Nichette," with which I own I am not familiar. It certainly amused the audience, and was not at all badly acted. Let Mr. Blackmore take heart and write us another play as good, for the world is getting serious and wants to be made to laugh occasionally.

Miss Stephanie Forrester is evidently an enthusiast, and has made a bold stroke towards fortune. Her play, founded on Whyte-Melville's fascinating story, shows great dramatic perception, and is to my mind extremely well arranged, considering that it is the first work of a novice. No time is wasted, action is not arrested by dialogue, and the salient points of dramatic construction have been observed. The first act that opens the story struck me as being particularly clever, and a little management would make a vast difference in the other two acts. The authoress received every encouragement from her audience. I could have wished a rearrangement of the cast, which would have materially improved the play, but it is too late now to talk about that. Mr. R. S. Boleyn was strong and pathetic in an important character, and Mr. Neville Doone again showed that he is one of our very promising young men, earnest, manly, and without a trace of affectation about him. As for Miss Emmeline Ormsby, she is so charming as a picturesque gipsy, that I fear she will be persuaded to be for ever in the secret of the Romanys and whispering mysteries in the ears of forlorn maidens. I hope she will not, for she is worthy of something better. This play was an experiment, and I do not see that it was an unsuccessful one. C. S.

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DRURY LANE PANTOMIME, 1881-82.

FROM SKETCHES BY ALFRED THOMPSON.

G. Terry. Lith., Little Denmark Street, Soho, London.

Our Omnibus-Box.

IF it is not too early to talk about Christmas pantomimes, and the novelties introduced therein, it may be well to sound a few advance notes. I suppose that everyone knows that the Old Drury pantomime is to be on the story of Sindbad, and, of course, by our dear old friend, E. L. Blanchard; and it is by this time equally well-known that Drury will have no rival. Covent Garden will be closed this Christmas, and if Mr. W. H. Ingram of the "Illustrated London News," or any other benefactor, desires to invite the London school-children and forgotten little ones to the play this winter, it cannot be at the huge opera-house in Bow Street. An arrangement appears to have been made, whereby Covent Garden is to have no pantomime at Christmas, and Drury Lane no Italian opera in the summer; but Carl Rosa goes to Drury in the spring, instead of to Her Majesty's.

In the matter of pantomime, I believe that Mr. Augustus Harris has engaged, as the advertisements say, "all the available talent." A better company could scarcely have been collected, though it seems a pity that Miss Fannie Leslie has been stolen away from London to the Grand Theatre at Leeds. One of the features of the Drury pantomime—so I hear—is a procession containing the kings, queens, and courtiers of every reign in English history from William the Conqueror to Victoria. Complete accuracy is to be insisted on in every detail of armour, head-dress, and costume. How Mr. Planché would have loved to have superintended that task, which, I presume, will be supervised by one of the most learned members of the Heralds College. M. Pilotell will design the dresses, and preside over the theatrical archæology. I am informed also, that Mr. Harris intends to curtail the inordinate length of the ballets that are supposed to be indispensable in pantomime. What children like—I mean old and young children; those who are really young, and such as become youthful in children's society—is a pantomime with a good deal of honest fun in it; not music-hall fun, but genuine pantomime.

If the harlequinade were hurried on, the public would be better pleased, for, as matters stand, it is curtailed to the very smallest dimensions. A harlequinade, stocked with first-class pantomimists, would be an agreeable novelty.

The interest connected with the forthcoming revival of "Much Ado about Nothing" at the Lyceum Theatre increases. Mr. Henry Irving has never played Benedick, but it will not be forgotten by playgoers at Leeds that on September 3rd, 1880, Miss Ellen Terry played Beatrice at the Grand Theatre to the Benedick of Mr. Charles Kelly. "It was Miss Terry's benefit night, and every stall was taken," so wrote Mr. W. Davenport Adams in The Theatre of October, 1880, to which he contributed an excellent description of "Miss Ellen Terry as Beatrice," to which I refer our readers with great pleasure. All who have their bound copies of The Theatre at hand may also be requested to refresh their memories with an article, "Beatrice and Hero," contributed to The Theatre of December, 1881, by Miss Gertrude Carr Davison.

The new Pandora Theatre, in Leicester Square, will open with pantomime; and, from all I can hear, the older theatres will have to bestir themselves, and look to their laurels. The subject, by Mr. Alfred Thompson, is the excellent one of "The Yellow Dwarf," in which Robson was once so admirable, and the public may be quite sure that no energy will be spared in presenting an entertainment that will be talked about. Arthur Roberts played in a very successful pantomime, on the same subject, in Manchester a few years ago, and, of course, he would have had an opportunity of repeating that success in London had not he already signed to appear at Drury Lane. This being the case, this clever comedian will not be attached to the Pandora company until Easter. He was to have played again in female costume; but, in his absence, the part will be taken by Mr. Vance. I have spoken elsewhere of the procession of court costume, dating from the Conqueror, which is to be the point of attraction at Drury Lane: here the spectacular novelty will be a fan ballet, designed and arranged by Mr. Alfred Thompson, who, after all, has no rival in the delicate art of stage arrangement, grouping, and colour.

Many years ago — how many I will not say — I distinctly remember attending at the Princess's Theatre, under Charles Kean's management, when the clown Huline, who succeeded Flexmore, introduced his two infant children dressed in the costume of clowns. They are children no more, I need scarcely state, but have grown up into active men and clever pantomimists like their father, and the Brothers Huline will be the pantomime leaders at the new Pandora; and, in order to suit the public taste, there will be other attractions of a more sensational kind. We are not to look for an unwieldy giantess, or a shrill-voiced dwarf: no monstrosities are to be expected. But, if I mistake not, the children who so bitterly lamented their lost Jumbo will be consoled when in the Christmas holidays they see the baby performing-elephants who are credited with such wonderful tricks, and have already won the approbation and applause of solemn audiences at Berlin. With a giantess on one side of the Square, and two young elephants on the other, sensation ought at least to be satisfied. M. Antonio Mora will conduct the music at the Pandora with taste and spirit. I have great faith in competition, and a natural distrust in monopolies. Leicester Square promises to be a theatrical centre, and the more theatres there the merrier. If the new Pandora Theatre, with its brilliancy, scenery, dresses, music, and novelty, wake up its neighbours, so much the better. Rivalry of this sort is wholesome.

Another admirable writer, scholar, and gentleman has been elected to the critical bench to share our "chicken and champagne" and "something else" that so vexes the virtuous soul of Mowbray Morris, to bear with us the blows and buffets, the sneers and slanders, the ignorance and impudence of little men and minds, and to discover in middle age the capriciousness of the art he would serve, and the often childishness of the artists who practise it. I allude to Mr. Godfrey Turner, who writes the dramatic column in the new "Pictorial World," one of the most magnificent outcomes of modern journalistic enterprise—a noble sixpennyworth of literature and art. Its pictures are—well, look for yourselves, and its writing is as good as that in the old "Illustrated Times," in the good days of the Broughs, Sala, Frank Talfourd, and Edmund Yates.

Mr. Godfrey Turner, besides being a master of the English language, with the clearest and purest of style, is a critic of original thought. He makes one remark on modern French farcical comedy too good to be lost. He says: "I venture to think that in calling French pieces of the 'Femme à Papa' type dirty, the grave mistake is implied of supposing there is any dirt which can be effectually removed. Candidly, these things are what they are, all their pruriences being in the very essence of the plot. Any detergent efforts, therefore, only smear and disfigure without cleansing. You may remove the extraneous grossness from a play of the poetical age of Elizabeth, and the poetry remains. You may even take away much impurity from the brilliant comedies of the Restoration and yet leave most of the wit. But there is almost as little wit as poetry in a Parisian vaudeville or opera bouffe, after it has been, like Bottom, 'translated.'" Now it strikes me that this is admirable criticism, and expresses neatly in a few words a truth that we have all been struggling to explain in columns.

Mr. Pinero's play of "The Squire" is doing wonderfully well in the provinces, and is hailed with delight after the surfeit of companies going round apparently for the purpose of exposing the extreme silliness of modern dramatic literature. Our country cousins must have a very poor opinion of London taste if they judge of it from the badly-acted farces that are placarded all over the country as if they were works of merit. Even Mr. Pinero must regret that he ever identified his name with "Imprudence," a play that as acted can bring him no credit whatever. To this rule such plays as "The Squire" and "The Parvenu" have been an honourable exception. They are like the draught of pure water in a parched desert, and have been so treated by the able reviewers of provincial newspapers.

As usual, Mr. John Hare, and his faithful companions, Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, took Manchester by storm, and they have continued their uninterrupted progress of success. I hear wonderful accounts of Mr. Hare's acting as the old "nipper"—as we used to call the rustics in Wiltshire—in "The Squire," the talkative, consequential, misleading old man identified in London with Mr. Mackintosh. It is said to be the finest bit of character-

painting that Mr. Hare has done, and we shall look forward to seeing it in London. Mr. Arthur Stirling has also won laurels by his rendering of the broad-church parson, Paul Dormer, "created" originally by Mr. Hare. By the way, talking of Gunnion, the Wiltshire or Somersetshire "nipper," I may be asked what is the derivation of that extraordinary word. Well, we used to say at school that it was derived on the lucus a non lucendo principle from the Greek *νίπτω*, because rustics don't wash.

Amongst the clever new comers to the "Parvenu" company now starring in the provinces, I hear many kind things said of Mrs. Kemys, who takes the part of Lady Pettigrew, and who promises well for the future. Mrs. Kemys is well-known in the Isle of Wight, where she played en amateur with considerable success; and, as I have often said before, it is from the ranks of the amateurs that the regular stage is now recruited.

We often hear of plays being "worked up," and of individual representations being far different at the end of a week or so than they were on the first night. The opera "Boccaccio" is a case in point, particularly as regards the acting of Mr. Lionel Brough. He has conceived a scene of comic, half-imbecile intoxication, which, in point of art, is equal, if not superior, to his Uncle Ben from the workhouse, which we once saw at the old Queen's in Long Acre, and in versatility and humour can compete with the "Toodles." There is no end of comic drunken scenes on the stage. Inebriation is the landmark of humour. But this man, as represented by Mr. Lionel Brough, is on the verge of incipient delirium tremens, and yet never for an instant offensive. Mr. Charles Warner, in his brilliant study of Coupeau in "Drink," detects, closes with, and exposes all the horrors, the brutality, and the degradation of the sot. His picture is terrible and appalling in its truth. Mr. Brough, on the other hand, can see only the exquisite folly of the drunkard, whose senses are fast disappearing. His picture is redolent with humour, and it is an artistic study. To see Mr. Brough catch at a wandering eyelash, fight imaginary flies and wasps, and see a harmless visionary mouse in his path, instead of the traditional "green rats," is as enjoyable to those who like to study the actor's art as it is laughable in the extreme to hear

him say, in that ludicrously pathetic manner, "Oh dear! I've got such a headache!" I hear that they are almost ready with M. Planquette's new opera—founded on the play and romance of "Rip van Winkle"—an original opera, with original music, originally produced in England. Only think of that! But I hope it won't prevent all, who can laugh heartily at a good thing, going to see Mr. Lionel Brough in "Boccaccio"—as funny a performance as can be seen in London this autumn. Those who cannot enjoy Mr. Brough's Lambertuccio, have evidently no sense of humour.

And after all, how people want to laugh, and how quickly they detect the true from the false in fun. There is at present in London a most extraordinary play, like nothing we have ever seen before—a wild, incomprehensible hotch-potch of a thing, as faulty as it can hold together, crammed with innumerable solecisms, contrary to every rule and order of art, utterly indefensible as a model, and extravagant; and yet I defy anyone to help laughing from one end of it to the other. It is played at the Olympic, and called "Fun on the Bristol." As a rule, I hate men in women's petticoats. I have inveighed against the vulgarity many a time and oft; but extravagant, and exaggerated, and vulgar as he is, there is such an odd quaintness about Mr. Sheridan, such a communicative sense of fun, that he sends the house into roars of laughter. It is impossible not to join in it. The play is more like a variety entertainment; it is full of songs, duets, choruses, parodies, plantation melodies, good, bad, and indifferent. But the audience has no time to pause and criticise; one good thing succeeds another. There are, however, some performers of great merit, amongst them a Miss May Livingstone, who is an admirable singer and burlesque actress, and there is a gentleman who delivers a nigger stump-speech to perfection. To miss "Fun on the Bristol" is wilfully to keep away from that wholesome medicine—a good laugh.

A correspondent of great experience and a very old play-goer sends me the following, which I willingly print:—

"Mr. Mowbray Morris has once more put pen to paper apparently "for the purpose of showing that everyone who does not think as

"he does is a fool. Despising, as he has ever done, the actor's art, "the art of acting, nay, the very 'atmosphere of the theatre,' which "appears to occasion so much nausea to his delicate stomach; "ridiculing the pretensions of an actor to be recognised as a creator "in any known sense of the term; patronising Mr. Boucicault for "cleverly propounding some well-worn platitudes and parading "them as a revealed gospel; and apparently wilfully misrepre- "senting the uttered and written words of Mr. Irving, this "youthful dogmatist has occupied several pages of a magazine "in defining the actor's art and in attempting to show that "'histrionic art is essentially imitative art.' The poet Campbell, "who actually disagreed with Mr. Mowbray Morris, is 'out of "all whooping.' The writer's sensitive nerves are quivering lest "they shall be 'liable to the infliction of such foolish talking "as Mr. Irving's.' The thousands of educated men and women "who see in Mr. Irving—just what Mr. Morris does not—an "earnest, painstaking, conscientious student of his art, are "sneered at as his 'satellites' or his 'henchmen,' they are 'silly "or interested flatterers,' and Heaven knows what besides. Truly "this is very loud talking, but it does not advance the question "much further than it was before the orator spoke.

"Disregarding the recorded opinions of the greatest critics of "the stage from Goethe downwards, all of which are totally at "variance with those expressed by the writer who once waxed "eloquent over the late Mr. Forrester's 'Iago,' and was moved to "enthusiasm by Mr. Charles Sugden's 'Cool,' our essayist flies "for refuge to Mr. A. A. Lipscomb, a writer in 'Harper's New "Monthly Magazine.' I sincerely beg Mr. Lipscomb's pardon, "but until this moment I had not heard of him or his writings. "Mr. Lipscomb, like Mr. Mowbray Morris, talks ex cathedrâ. He "says: 'At best the actor is only an interpreter, the ideas and "language are prepared to his hand, and he has no employment "for his personal qualities beyond the mere mechanical rendering. "To do this effectively is an art—call it, if you please, a rare "art; but no one can deny that its chief merit lies in the physical "organism, and hence its excellence mainly consists in the sub- "ordination of mind to matter. To identify it with such an "interpretation of the hidden meanings of Nature as Wordsworth

"gave in his poetry, or with such inventive imitation as Smeaton "put forth when he converted the buttresses and trunk of an "oak-tree into Eddystone Lighthouse, is downright absurdity.' "Indeed! then this uninspired interpreter here quoted is an actor; "this soulless stuff is art. It must be so. Mr. Mowbray Morris says "so. He is eloquent about it, and declares that 'this is the "very truth, the first word and the last of the whole matter, "and not all the trumpets sounded at Theatrical Fund dinners, or "wheresoever else the actor and his henchmen are gathered "together, can destroy it.' 'The range and limitation of theatric "art,' says the oracular Morris, 'are at the disposition neither "of the vanity of the individual nor the applause of the multitude. "They are defined by reason and common-sense. The actor is "only an interpreter, and the means of his interpretation are "the body and the tongue. I cannot but think that to talk of "the genius of an actor as we talk of the genius of a poet, or "a musician, or a painter, is to talk a little loosely.'

"Indeed! then Mr. George Henry Lewes, who may or may not "have been partial to 'chicken and champagne,' but who certainly "was not 'a silly or interested flatterer,' was entirely of an "opposite opinion to our very modern essayist and to his friend, "Mr. Lipscomb. 'Had Shakespeare,' says Mr. Lewes, 'seen "Garrick, Kemble, or Kean performing in plays not his own, he "might doubtless have perceived a thousand deficiencies in their "conception and defects in their execution; but had he appeared "on the same stage with them, even in plays of his own, the "audience would have seen the wide gulf between conception "and presentation. One lurid look, one pathetic intonation, "would have more power in swaying the audience than all the "subtle and profound passion which agitated the soul of the "poet, but did not manifestly express itself; the look and the tone "may come from a man so drunk as to be scarcely able to stand, "but the public sees only the look, hears only the tone, and "is irresistibly moved by these intelligible symbols."

"But to my mind the most astounding part of the argument of "Mr. Mowbray Morris is the attempt to prove that Mr. Boucicault "is right in stating that inspiration, as we call it, is valueless "without instruction, by the illustration of Mr. Henry Irving.

"He keeps harping on his Romeo, and nagging at his Othello, as "if Mr. Irving had never done anything else, or had never before "proved himself an artist. He seems to forget that no actor of "his time has so patiently, so studiously, so bravely worked at his "art for success. He appears to ignore a fact, which I suppose is "indisputable, that no living actor of to-day has played so many "varied parts, or, on the whole, played them so well. Is there "an actor or actress of any time or any age who, being ambitious, "did not occasionally fail to satisfy the highest standpoint of "criticism? Again let me refer Mr. Mowbray Morris to the "author of 'Actors and Acting.' 'It would form an interesting "question,' says Mr. Lewes, 'why actors so transcendent as "Kean and Rachel should have been singularly limited in the "range of characters they could play with effect—why, being "confessedly great in a few difficult parts, they *could not be* "*even tolerable* in many parts less difficult and demanding the "same kind of talent. But as this is a question I am not "prepared to answer, I content myself with calling attention to "it.' The author of 'Essays in the Art of Acting' would answer "it without a blush, and had he lived in the days when Kean "and Rachel were 'not even tolerable,' and was appointed to "criticise them, he would either deny them talent at all, or "ascribe the enthusiasm they created to chicken, champagne, "henchmen, greasy flatterers and adulators, sentimentalists, or "their. own 'foolish talking.' Whatever the ex-critic of the "'Times' may think, I do not believe that there are many "students of the stage who would state that Mr. Henry Irving "'was not even tolerable' in any part he ever attempted, and "I say this having carefully watched and studied everything he "has done, from the day he appeared in 'Ivy Hall,' at the Princess's "Theatre, to the night he stepped upon the stage as Romeo."

The dramatic profession, as regards its ill-bred, ungenerous, and ill-educated members, is in the habit of following any blundering leader, just as sheep do the old bell-wether. When Mrs. Langtry appeared, and dared—being an educated woman—to adopt the stage as a profession, and to do what thousands of men and women before had done; when she made a proper and justifiable use of the gifts that God had given her, and elected to study dramatic art, just as others study music and painting;

when she made the plunge, and risked ignominious failure, and when, in spite of her curiously difficult position, she succeeded sufficiently to justify good judges in urging her to go on, an attempt was made to hound her down. All that malice, envy, and uncharitableness could do was done to turn her into ridicule. Sensible men and women tore their hair and foamed, declaring that "art" had been insulted by the modest study of art. They were not content with attacking Mrs. Langtry: they vilified and abused the management that gave her a hearing. The self-satisfied writer of the most egotistical and insolent book of the year indulged in a sneer like the rest. He talked of a "lamentable exhibition of folly and bad taste," and he did not look at home before uttering those words.

We need not be surprised, therefore, when we learn what treatment has been extended to the kind and generous instructress, herself an actress of tried and ample experience, who naturally loves the profession in which she was reared, and who, believing in Mrs. Langtry, had the courage of her opinions. "You will hardly believe it," says this lady, "but not a day passed for some weeks that did not bring a shoal of anonymous protests against my pushing Mrs. Langtry upon the stage, as they called it, to the detriment of the writers and their families, taking the bread out of their mouths, giving a woman a front place without the drudgery of learning her business, and a woman who was not in need, a woman who had means of her own. These were the mildest form of protest; some of them were full of abuse, and they have not ceased to come. I had two yesterday, saying that the money Mrs. Langtry had made is stolen from the regular artists who belong to the profession. In addition to this one, a few critics, as you know, have been ungenerous about us. But we shall get over that, for Mrs. Langtry is really clever. She is quick, intelligent, industrious, and if it is not a sin to teach acting—and it is quite a labour of love on my part, as you know—I do not feel that I have committed a great crime in giving to the stage a new actress, and more particularly at a time when there never was so great a dearth of actresses as now." This sums up neatly the whole question. The stage is not a hospital for decayed artists; nor is it a soup-kitchen. As for the anonymous letter-writer, he is a coward.

The stage is to have a new recruit. Mr. Gilbert Farquhar, a gentleman well known in society, and who has obtained special reputation as a raconteur, will join the company at the Court Theatre, and will appear in an original part in "a new and original drama." Here will be another chance to blubber like babies about "taking the bread out of the poor actor's mouth," and, to use such elegant expressions as were used to Mrs. Langtry, "the folly of fashionable friends and fashionable toadies," "the flattery of fools," and other like insults which were deliberately offered to a lady when she came forward to aid the exchequer of the Royal Theatrical Fund. I can only trust that Mr. Farquhar will do as well as Mrs. Langtry has done, and beat down, as she has done, the miserable opposition bred of jealousy, envy, and unmanliness. For were we not told by the theatrical Delphic oracle, when Mrs. Langtry first appeared: "If it be true that she proposes now to adopt the stage as a profession, she will be quickly undeceived if she imagines that the approval of friends and flatterers will be endorsed by the general public, who, when they pay for talent, expect to get it." What marvellous foresight, what knowledge of the world, what prescience, to be sure! This oracular utterance was followed by (A) Mrs. Langtry's successful appearance at the Haymarket; (B) her extraordinary reception in the provinces; (C) her American engagement; (D) the crowded houses at the Imperial during her farewell engagement. The public does not want self-satisfied fossils, but freshness, talent, and energy.

Attractive as may be the abnormal proportions of Marian the giantess at the Alhambra, Mr. Holland is not unmindful of the requirements of that art which must ever be the most prominent at that eminently popular theatre—dancing. The latest engagement is a thoroughly excellent one, namely, Signorina Consuello de Labruyère from the Scala at Milan; from Berlin, Vienna, and Frankfort. She is a dancer of grace as well as force. She does not depend entirely upon muscular strength and no more. Her tricks are good, but her taste is equally pre-eminent. Talking about taste and conspicuous grace, I wonder that more mention is not made of an English dancer at the Alhambra, Miss Lizzie Percival, who, to my mind, is as poetical a dancer as any of her foreign companions. I have just come from Vienna, where they

understand the "poetry of motion," and there such a dancer as Miss Percival would be more appreciated than the ladies with muscles of steel and cast-iron toes. Every movement is graceful, every step has lightness and action in it. Whilst we admire foreign art, do not let us forget our own, that has here a charming representative.

The Drury Lane drama of "Pluck" has been considerably altered and unquestionably improved. The play that originally ended in a fire and a fog now concludes with a most requisite explanation, and a scene has also been added of some dramatic interest before the attack upon the bank. For several weeks during the run of the piece the management was deprived of the services of Mr. Harry Jackson through an accident, but that clever actor and genial gentleman is now well again and playing with renewed energy. The services of Mr. Jackson have been retained for the Christmas pantomime, which is already in silent preparation.

I had occasion some months ago to call attention to a very valuable treatise on "Precious Stones and Gems," written by Mr. Edwin W. Streeter, and containing the accurate history and characteristics of the most celebrated precious stones in the world. This, so far, was the most important work by the author of "Gold," who has familiarised himself with the science of minerals, and has a captivating style in combining dry fact with more alluring romance. These special qualities are even more strongly shown in Mr. Streeter's latest book, which is in fact the history and romance of "The Great Diamonds of the World." It may not be generally known that there is a story of vivid interest connected with every one of the famous jewels now in the possession of Kings, Queens, and Empresses, quite as mysterious as the famous romance of the Diamond Necklace, and almost as sensational as The Moonstone of Mr. Wilkie Collins. Aided by Mr. Joseph Hatton and Mr. A. H. Keane, Mr. Streeter has now added another handsome volume to the library of gems, and it will not be uninteresting to our readers to learn that the important chapter on the "Koh-i-nûr" diamond was read and approved in manuscript by Her Majesty the Queen, and the accounts of the

Pitt and Eugénie diamonds were actually revised by the Empress Eugénie before publication. The publishers of this handsome and entertaining volume are George Bell and Sons, of York Street, Covent Garden.

The Forest Hotel Fêtes at Chingford, that lovely sylvan nook in Epping Forest, which are to take place every Saturday throughout the autumn, will enable the public to be better acquainted with scenery which, to my mind, equals and very

often excels the far-famed Burnham Beeches. Those who have not seen it have no idea what Epping Forest is like, how romantic, how secluded, how varied, and it may be seen now at one of the most important changes of beauty from the glow of summer to the gold of autumn. The changing colours of the forest foliage and the effects of autumn sunset are seen in perfection at the Forest Hotel, one of the best-decorated and cosiest homes that I know near London. It has all the charm of the old with the comfort of the modern, the eye is pleased and the taste satisfied.

I can conceive no greater treat after a long strong walk over the turf these lovely autumnal days, the health invigorated, the appetite sharpened, the mind soothed, to find oneself in pleasant companionship in, say, the Queen Anne or Renaissance sitting-room, varying the pleasant hours of dinner with peeps at the twilight stealing over wood and glade, and looking forward to the time when daylight being done the candles will come in and with them wit and humour, good fellowship, and conversation over "the walnuts and the wine." And then the feast being over and the cigar out, arguments settled, and asperities rubbed off, then will come, induced by a charming room and spotless cleanliness, artistic furniture, and scented linen, that balmy sleep,

> The innocent sleep ;
> Sleep that knits up the ravelled sleeve of care,
> The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath,
> Balm of hurt minds, great Nature's second course,
> Chief nourisher in life's feast.

Such a "life's feast" can be promised down at the Forest Hotel, when properly understood by those who presumably disagree with the surly philosopher who "declared that life would be tolerable were it not for its amusements."

A rather curious performance took place at the Marylebone Theatre on Thursday afternoon, September 21st. It was the production of a new four-act play, by Mr. Bronson Howard, called "Young Mrs. Winthrop." This piece is to be brought out at the Madison Square Theatre, New York, on October 9th. It was only acted once at the Marylebone Theatre for the purpose of securing the copyright. Of course, under the circumstances, it would be a little unfair to the author to judge his work; but I should think that it will be successful when properly acted, and efficiently mounted. The plot of the piece is extremely simple. A husband and wife are estranged from each other, and the only tie that binds them is their little child. But this link is broken by the death of the infant, and husband and wife become more and more separated from each other. The husband is absent from America for some time, and only returns to arrange about a separation from his wife. But when the couple meet, the memory of their early love comes back to them, and they are reconciled. This is the slender plot of an interesting play.

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Yours while

Ellen Terry

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN SPECIALLY FOR THIS MAGAZINE BY THE

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The Theatre.

NOVEMBER, 1882.

THE AMUSEMENTS OF THE PEOPLE.

THE observant Englishman who returns home from a spell on the Continent is struck with nothing so much as the contrast between this and other nations in the matter of well-ordered and rational amusements. He naturally, if he have any pride in his country, prefers his own fireside; the change from rich and often unwholesome food to plain roast and boiled, and to the discipline of simple honest fare, is far more welcome than the fastidious epicure is ever likely to allow.

It is not mere insular obstinacy, but an acquired and uneradicable taste, that gives zest and appetite to the renewed luncheon of a mutton-chop and a glass of English beer. Sanitary arrangements have improved wonderfully on the Continent within the last ten years, and it is now possible to find the decencies of life as much attended to in neglected Naples as in civilised Paris; but, though the stomach may not so continually suffer or the nose be so constantly offended, there are certain harmless pleasures that the most conservative Briton positively misses when he has seen the last of a gay and careless life, and prepares to encounter the terrors of a dull and stereotyped decorum.

For London, to tell the truth, in the matter of its chance recreations is the dullest capital of the civilised world, and what London is the provinces and their dependencies must be. We have our theatres and music-halls, of course, neither of them, after all, so elevating in tone as many would desire; but apart from these the people of this mighty metropolis are only permitted to be

amused on sufferance, and are hampered on all sides by a nervous terror of immorality, or by the innumerable intricacies of the yet unsettled licensing question. We go to the Continent, it matters little where—to France, to Belgium, to Germany, or to Italy—and see people apparently not more immoral, and certainly less inclined to be drunken than ourselves, who are not brow-beaten by fancy legislation, and do not permit themselves to be gagged in their pleasures by well-meaning specialists.

If they want to go to a theatre, there they find it ready to their hand; if they desire to drink a cup of coffee and to smoke a cigar after dinner, they are not forced into scenes and society that are objectionable to them; if, with their coffee and cigar, they can hear good music and minstrelsy that stop short of the inane and the drivelling, they extend to that place and that scene their special patronage; if it does not suit them to sit out a long play, and they have not time for the proper observance of a regular theatrical entertainment, they can betake themselves to places where they can find short plays, diminutive operas, bright scenes, united to a freedom which would be out of place in a well-appointed theatre, and everywhere a legitimate demand is followed by a liberal supply.

We sigh for such freedom in this country, and we sigh in vain. There are thousands and tens of thousands of decent and law-abiding citizens who do not desire to encourage immorality or drunkenness, or debauchery or disorder of any kind; who desire to go out with their wives and daughters and to enjoy a rational amusement at a reasonable rate; to hear the kind of music that is supplied in abundance in other capitals; to change the monotony of melancholy for reasonable harmless pleasure; to play chess, or dominoes, or draughts during the intervals of business without being considered candidates for instant annihilation; to discuss politics away from the pot-house, and to read the newspapers in cheerful public places; to utilise our great thoroughfares and our splendid embankments as other nations would employ them; and to make our daily life in this workaday world freer, less restricted, and brighter than it is; but to express such a wish is to call down the bigotry of religious fervour, and to carry it into execution involves the speculator in financial ruin.

There are two fallacies that require instant annihilation in connection with this most serious question of the restriction of our

public amusements. The first is that our treacherous climate is the only bugbear; the second is that the exercise of legitimate amusement means simply and solely the encouragement of sin. As to the first, it is preposterous to imagine for a moment that, science, with its manifold ramifications, cannot utilise our climate, such as it is, to the better pleasures of the people. Is our climate, after all, so very much worse nowadays than that of the adjacent countries on this side of the Alps? They can build winter gardens elsewhere—why not here? They can construct sheltered cafés on the boulevards of Paris—why not on the embankments of London? When the snow falls in Brussels, or the hail pelts down in Berlin, or the storms visit Vienna, or tempests wash the streets of Geneva or Zurich, the people inhabiting those capitals are not deprived of their music or cut off from their song.

The growing youth of those great cities are not forced, "faute de mieux," to the temptations of alluring drinking-bars or driven into close and evil-smelling wine-shops; they are not compelled by praiseworthy philanthropists to rub shoulders with the idle and the vicious; they are not forced to find nothing outside the theatre but trumpery and trash, dreary doggerel and monstrous suggestiveness, saddening spectacle and daring double meaning. There is always in every city of the civilised world plenty of vice for the vicious; but there are places outside such capitals as virtuous London where recreation is not necessarily rowdyism, and amusement can be found outside the casino and the dancing-shop. It is the deliberate opinion of scores of well-meaning people that amusement, in its highest and most legitimate sense, is only a synonym for the allurement of vice. But has not this patient hobby been ridden a little too hard?

Let us be honest about the matter, and speak out the truth like men. Is London a more noble temple of virtue, a more pattern city, a more God-fearing place, than it was before this wholesale barricading of the avenues to recreation took place? Is society more chastened, and its representatives more sober, than when the fallacy was attempted of making people moral by Act of Parliament? Can we look with greater pride on London as it is than on London as it was; and is it not possible that the best-intentioned magistrate in the world is not the best judge of the method of teaching the people how to be decent and well-conducted? All credit to the various religious

bodies and sects for doing what they have done, and for awakening the people to the hideousness of depravity and the enormity of sin; but have they, let us ask, altogether proved the justice of their reforms or the common-sense of their practice?

Is it not high time that the more moderate thinkers should have an innings—men who honestly believe that the people do not want to be drunken and degraded and dirty, but sober and sound and steady; men who maintain that there is another way to the people's hearts—by music; another way to their better intelligence—by legitimate recreation; another way to their reform—by giving them freedom in their amusements, pictures to look at, even though it be on Sunday—places where they can meet and chat and read—rendezvous where the very presence of virtue and sobriety would be the best deterrent of the vice that is inevitable? Virtuous and vicious society are as incapable of mixing as oil and water, and the best-conducted cafés in this country, where the experiment of decency has been tried, prove incontestably that order is the best policeman in the world to check disorder.

But this is not wholly a religious or philanthropic question. Many there are who believe—and have had occasion to say so more than once—that the freedom of the amusements of the people is in a great measure checked by the uncertain laws and incomprehensible legislation that govern those amusements. So long as our legislators permit our statute book to be burdened with Acts of Parliament totally inapplicable to modern life and custom, and places of amusement to be governed by rules framed for the suppression of disorderly houses, it is quixotic to hope for a better state of things. Where is the capitalist who would come forward to establish a winter garden, to build a comprehensible café, or to unite refreshment and song on any legitimate basis, when the whole of his investment, his energy, and his toil are at the mercy of a capricious bench of magistrates, or when the fabric of his energy is at the mercy of any common informer?

To build a theatre is the safest of all speculations—and why? Because the Lord Chamberlain never fails to grant a license that is practically irrevocable, and because the speculator is safe to find a tenant. But any other speculation in amusements is the most dangerous that can be quoted, because it is dependent upon laws connected with music and dancing that are absolutely contradictory, and administered by magistrates who are notoriously swayed by private and privileged information whenever the annual license

is applied for. It is a most serious and vexatious anomaly to find theatres administered by an official who has one sensible and official line of action, and all other places of amusement all over Great Britain exposed to the caprice and contradictory ruling of an unpaid and irresponsible magistracy. The low standard of our public amusements outside the theatre is a fact deplored by no people more than the proprietors of those places. They know what the people want; but they dare not stir hand or foot whilst the law remains as it is. Their patrons have to put up with the best that obsolete legislation allows. The music that necessitates the merest semblance of dialogue is, in the eyes of the Legislature, a heinous offence; the mere attempt at a dance on the music-hall stage, however discreet and orderly, involves a license that was in the old days granted to casinos, and is not wanted by the music-halls at all.

It is strange, indeed, that free trade should be encouraged in every department of life except the very natural and wholesome one of rational public amusement, and that enterprise should be paralysed by the indifference of our legislators to a subject more grievously felt than they can possibly know. Nearly twenty years ago a Committee of the House of Commons, having taken evidence from experts in every branch and department of popular art and amusement, reported upon the inconsistency and unintelligibility of the existing laws, and recommended just what sensible observers have urged ever since. But nothing has been done. The population has increased, and the claims of those who are not bigoted have become more pressing in the course of time. But the Committee has not been followed up by a Royal Commission, and the anomaly is only allowed to creep out when the public is scared by the cry of fires in theatres.

Every year, when Ash Wednesday comes round or when some exceptional case of hardship is exposed, the mere fringe of the subject is discussed; but at its root and at its heart is the far more important question whether, by liberality, common-sense, and fair play, the people of this magnificent city cannot be amused without danger of contamination, and whether, with all its wealth, its enterprise, and its talent, London should continue to be the dullest and dreariest capital to be found in the civilised world.

Nay, I would go further, and venture to ask whether the very great and singular success of the Salvation Army and its kindred associations is not in a great measure due to the neglected

consideration of the amusements of the people? The depressed crowds fall in together and follow the band! At last they can hear music, at last they can sing and cheer, at last the deplorable dreariness of their Sunday is relieved by something like excitement and relaxation. The people, attracted by the music, the shouting, and the singing, get away from their dreary homes and the lifeless streets and follow the band. The tunes, what are they? mostly popular ones; the songs, what are they? paraphrased from the music-hall. The leaders of this extraordinary movement, who buy up theatres and secularise religion, are so far wise in their generation that they catch converts by giving people what they so earnestly desire—life and amusement. The museums, the art galleries, the gardens, all must be closed on Sunday; but at last popular religion has got in the thin end of the wedge, and the people with a sigh of satisfaction follow the band!

C. S.

AFTER THE PLAY.

SHE sat amid the stillness of her room,
A wreath hung idly in her careless grasp,
The jewel in the setting of her clasp
Glimmered, a lonely star, amid the gloom.
"Ah, what," she cried, "can fame or beauty bring,
If they bring not my lover to my side?
Why should he treat me with disdain and pride?
Does not the city with my triumphs ring?
Ah, love, sweet love, why does thy passion die,
E'en with thy mimic death upon the stage,
And leave me reft of hope in word and deed,
So that each night I feel the agony
Pierce my fond heart? Is this alone the wage
Of Fame, to win not love, but leave the heart to bleed?"

J. W. P.

KYRLE BELLEW.

(See Photographic Frontispiece.)

ALTHOUGH the ranks of the theatrical profession are full of men whose lives—from the nature and uncertainty of their calling—are more replete with incident and adventure than those of most people, it is seldom that such varied experiences fall to the lot of one person, as those through which Mr. Kyrle Bellew has passed. The younger son of the late J. M. Bellew, he was originally intended for the army, but in early years conceived a strong passion for an adventurous career, and determined to go to sea. This predilection for a roving life was strongly combatted at home; but the die was at last cast which settled Mr. Bellew's immediate future, for after running away from home, on his return his father resolved to make the best of a bad job and send the boy "vagabondising," as he called it, in a proper manner. In a few weeks the youth had exchanged the comforts of home for the discipline of the training-ship, which in due time he left to sail under the command of the late Sir Digby Murray.

The next five years of Mr. Bellew's life were passed amongst scenes which fully satisfied his tastes for adventure and excitement. During his first voyage he was overboard on two occasions; first in the Bay of Bengal, when he was picked up by a native vessel and returned to his ship; secondly in the depth of winter off the North Foreland, where, numbed by the cold, he was recovered from the water apparently lifeless. Dismantled in one of the terrible Indian cyclones, and reaching home in a wrecked and disabled ship, Mr. Bellew, at the urgent request of his father, consented to stop on shore, and was procured an appointment in a large firm of shipbrokers in the City. Here his stay was brief. Unused to the restraint of office, the ex-sailor soon tired of the work, and went to sea again, shipping as third mate on board an Indiaman, falling in with many adventures amongst the islands of the Indian seas; three weeks with a burnt-out crew in open boats being amongst the experiences of the time.

On his return to England Mr. Bellew first conceived the idea of going on the stage. His life when at home had from the earliest days been spent amongst artists and literary men. Mrs. Rousby

was then at the summit of her popularity, and offered him an engagement to join her in London. His father, however, had strong objections to the proposal, and Mr. Kyrle Bellew determined once more to leave England, and he again sailed from home, bound this time for the Australian colonies. Amongst the many letters of introduction he carried, was one from Mr. Dion Boucicault to George Coppin, the manager of the Theatre Royal, Melbourne. On arriving in the colonies, Mr. Bellew made application for employment under the Government, and was offered a small appointment in the Census Office. Mr. Coppin, however, had in the meantime proposed to him to read a lecture on the Franco-Prussian War, illustrated by a panorama; for which five pounds per week was offered to him.

Mr. Kyrle Bellew made his first bow to the public in consequence at Kreitmayer's Wax-Works, Melbourne. But the lecturing only lasted seven weeks, and then came a period of financial embarrassment that rendered immediate action necessary. This took the form of a journey up north to a new gold rush on the borders of New South Wales, over twelve hundred miles away. Arriving at the nearest civilised spot to the diggings, Mr. Bellew and his fellow-companion started with one horse and a collie-dog right into the bush. The result was obvious. They were soon lost, but after many trials and hardships at last arrived safely and joined a camp of gold prospectors with whom their fortunes were joined for some months. Good times came, and bad followed, until one day, destitute and almost starving, Mr. Bellew found himself in the bar of a grog-shanty. There he opportunely met a friend who suggested that he should act. And accordingly his first appearance on the stage was made as Eglantine Roseleaf in the farce of "Turn Him Out," and occurred in the theatre in Solferino Gold Fields, New South Wales, where he played Corporal Max, Richard III., and Hamlet, all in the same dress.

But the diggings got "played out," and once more hard up, he was cast upon the world and his own resources. With no money and few clothes, and no companion but a collie-dog, he started off south again to try and return to civilisation. Having reached the nearest seaport and stowed away on board a coasting steamer, he eventually landed in Melbourne, where, finding friends on the newspapers, he obtained a berth as reporter on the "Age," the Liberal organ of Melbourne. The next three years of his life were passed in the newspaper world of Melbourne. On the death

of his father in 1874, he determined to return to England, but the means not being forthcoming, a year passed away before an opportunity offered of his doing so. This at last happened in the shape of one of his old captains, who having lost his third officer took Mr. Bellew on the ship's books in that capacity.

After a fearful passage round the Horn in which the ship got down amongst the ice, Mr. Bellew landed in England on the 10th of August, 1875. Seeing an advertisement for a "light comedian," to join Mr. Charles Barrington on tour with Miss Helen Barry, he applied and obtained the post, making his first appearance on the English stage at the Theatre Royal, Brighton, as Lord Woodstock in "Clancarty," ten days after he had left his ship. In December Mr. Tom Taylor picked Mr. Bellew out from amongst the "utility" gentlemen at the Haymarket Theatre, where he had obtained employment, and cast him for Lord Percy in "Anne Boleyn," a choice that was afterwards justified by the press, but Paris in "Romeo and Juliet" was destined to be his first assumption there, and under his christian-names of Harold Kyrle he made his first appearance in London.

At the Haymarket Theatre he remained for some weeks, when Mr. Bancroft engaged him for the part of a midshipman in "Wrinkles," at the Prince of Wales's. The piece failing to draw, Mr. Bellew, after a brief engagement with Mr. Edgar Bruce at the Aquarium Theatre, returned to the Haymarket as "Walking Gentleman." Opportunity came by accident for him to show, however, that he was worthy of better things than the perpetual "Charles, his friend," kind of parts. Mr. W. S. Gilbert was producing "Engaged," and after many vicissitudes the part of "Belvawney" fell into the young actor's hands, with what result is well known. Mr. Bellew at once rose from an insignificant position to one which commanded attention, and Mr. John S. Clarke, the then manager of the theatre, raised him both in position and salary. Miss Neilson playing an engagement gave him a further chance, and his renderings of Claudio in "Measure for Measure," the Duke Orsino in "Twelfth Night," Beauséant in "The Lady of Lyons," and other parts, soon gained for him several good offers from other theatres.

A short engagement with Miss Litton, during which Mr. Frank Marshall produced "Family Honour," served as a stepping-stone for Mr. Bellew to further advancement; his pourtrayal of a character in that drama showing an originality of execution in depicting villainy

under a pleasing and unsuspected aspect that drew forth universal praise from critics both public and private. Joining Messrs. James and Thorne for a short period, Mr. Bellew played the butterman's son in the then seemingly immortal "Our Boys," and after a special engagement of three weeks in Dublin, he returned to London to appear once more on the memorable occasion of the opening of the Lyceum under Mr. Irving.

Here for the first time he acted under his father's name, and the cheers which greeted the young actor on his entry as Osric carried with them a deeper meaning than the mere welcome of himself. Mr. Kyrle Bellew remained with Mr. Irving two seasons, when Miss Marie Litton secured him for the leading juvenile business in her company at the Imperial Theatre. At the time this was the most powerful company assembled in London, numbering as it did, Mrs. Stirling, Miss Litton, Miss Addison, Mr. W. Farren, Mr. Lionel Brough, Mr. John Ryder, Mr. F. Everill, Mr. Bannister, and on occasions, Mr. Phelps, Mr. Henry Neville, Mr. Hermann Vezin, and others. Mr. Bellew opened in "The Beaux Stratagem," which piece gave way to a modern comedy, "Light and Shade," in which he made his mark.

The old comedies followed each other in quick succession; Mr. Bellew playing Young Marlowe, Jack Absolute, and other parts. The memorable production of "As You Like It" brought the young actor prominently forward as a new representative of Shakespeare's poetical Orlando. The criticisms on this performance place it amongst the most perfect the modern stage has seen, and have drawn more attention to Mr. Bellew's subsequent performances than falls to the lot of most actors of so comparatively short an experience on the stage. The reputation established by his Orlando has, however, been well supported by performances such as Sir George Airy in "The Busy Body," Charles Surface, and Young Marlowe; in the pourtrayal of which characters Mr. Bellew stands almost alone. Mr. Bellew is at present playing in the provinces with Miss Litton's company in "Moths." His Corrèze has been so recently witnessed in town that reference to it now is needless.

Next year Mr. Kyrle Bellew goes into management for himself, his first venture being to take round the provinces and to America and elsewhere, the production of "Romeo and Juliet" from the Lyceum Theatre, he himself playing Romeo.

AN OLD BURLESQUE.

By Dutton Cook.

TO consider an old burlesque, is, perhaps, "to consider too curiously," as Horatio says. And a burlesque produced six-and-thirty years since, while too old to interest the play-goer of to-day, may be judged not old enough to secure the regard of the antiquary. Burlesques are such ephemera, and their fair hour is so soon lived; they are the froth of dramatic literature; a breath disperses them; promptly the place that knew them knows them no more; they are gone, and for ever. Nevertheless, a burlesque is the creature of its period; it is fed with the topics of the day: with allusions to current events, with mention of this notable person and that, with jests and equivoques once recognised as relevant enough. In such wise it wears a historical complexion. It is representative, in its way, of taste and fashion; it exhibits something of the form and pressure of the very age and body of its time. Assuredly, if it is worth while to know how a past generation occupied itself —was pleased and entertained—it may be as well now and then to take from its shelf and contemplate even so effete and absurd a thing as an old burlesque.

In May, 1846, at the Lyceum Theatre, then under the management of Mr. and Mrs. Keeley, there was produced "a grand operatic romantic burlesque spectacle," in three acts, written by Messrs. Stocqueler, Shirley Brooks, and Charles Kenney, and entitled "Robin Hood and Richard Cœur de Lion." The subject was derived in part from Scott's "Ivanhoe," the Baron Front de Bœuf à la Mode figuring prominently among the dramatis personæ. But there were other contributories to the work. Vincent Wallace's opera, founded upon the play of "Don Cæsar de Bazan," and an opera by M. Jules Benedict, called "The Crusaders," the libretto by Mr. Alfred Bunn and M. de St. Georges, had recently been given to the world. The authors of the burlesque borrowed from the one work its heroine, Maritana, and appropriated two of the characters in "The Crusaders"—the Old Man of the Mountain, and the beautiful

Sumnite girl, Almea. Further, it was ingeniously arranged that the Old Man of the Mountain should be modernised and rejuvenated, so as to appear as Abdel-Kader, who forty years ago was much troubling the French army in its occupation of Algiers. It is asked: "Who is that little man with beard so grisly?" He answers:

> I'm Abdel-Kader, just escaped from Isly,
> The French to catch me frequently have thought:
> I never am—but always to be—caught.

At a later period of the play, Abdel-Kader throws off his white burnous and Eastern robes, and with the admirable inconsequence of burlesque, appears as Robin Hood's old comrade, Friar Tuck, the while he exclaims:

> Ha! ha! ha! isn't this a transformation?
> I knew I should create a great sensation.

Little other explanation is afforded of his change of aspect and person; but it may be mentioned that the representative of Abdel-Kader and the Friar was that most popular of comedians, Mr. Keeley, who already, in the first scene of the extravaganza, had appeared, wearing evening dress, in his own proper character as the lessee and manager of the Lyceum Theatre.

Upon the rising of the curtain, the cauldron scene in "Macbeth" was parodied, by way of prologue to the play. Three dramatic authors were seen circum-ambulating a large inkstand, and throwing in the ingredients of a new burlesque:

> Tale of Fairy, joke of Hood,
> Squibs from "Punch," not understood.
> An evil Djinn, a host of sprites,
> By Coryphées in silken tights.
> Dissolving Views and Poses Plastiques,
> The Human Tripod—how unique!

It is necessary to explain that a three-legged child—a distressing object—was then in course of exhibition in Regent Street.

> Mazourkas, Polkas, and Quadrilles,
> Keller's Muscles, Cockle's Pills.

Keller was a herculean male model, the chief of a Poses Plastique, or Tableaux Vivants company, then appearing at Vauxhall Gardens, at the Egyptian Hall, and elsewhere.

> Airs from Balfe on organ ground,
> Scraps from Shakespeare, once renowned.
> Bubble, bubble, horrid trouble,
> Stir up well, and Burles ue bubble.

Railway jests of various uses—
Workhouse tyrants and abuses—
Surrey combats, scenes to tally,
Parodies on opera-ballet.
London slang and quaint dog-Latin—
Ah! put that in. Yes, put that in.
Sly allusion, only spare
What the Licenser won't bear.
Bubble, bubble, toil and trouble,
Brains ferment, and Burlesque bubble!
Put in bits from Walter Scott,
Percy reliques, musty lot,
Scraps from Wallace, and some more
From the Benedictine score, etc., etc.

A small Robin Hood rose from the inkstand, after the manner of one of the Macbeth apparitions, and with the words "Be bold; play this, and prosper," presented a manuscript to Mr. Keeley and vanished. It was understood that the subject of the burlesque was to be Robin Hood, and the scene changed to Sherwood Forest.

The outlaws are uneasy. A reference to history occurs. In 1846 there was warfare in India. Will Scarlet asks: "Have you not heard the news?" Robin answers:

About the Sikhs?
Lord Viscount Hardinge thrashed them all like bricks.
Show him the banner on a foeman's walls,
He'll soon send home fresh drapery for St. Paul's.

But the danger is nearer home, it appears. The greenwood home of the merry men is threatened. There is a report to the effect that Sherwood Forest has been sold by Prince John to the New Nottingham Building Society. Robin Hood, personated of course by Mrs. Keeley, soliloquises:

All the world consists of building spots,
And all the men and women seek for lots.
On eligible sites their thoughts they fix,
And one man in his time meets many bricks.
First the surveyor marking out his line,
And then the architect with plan so fine;
The landlord next, beholds, with wondering eyes,
His money sink and then his building rise.
A. rears a residence in Belgrave Square;
B. is content in Prospect Row to share;
C. has an interest in a little alley;
D. stocks with cottages a rural valley.
Each has a crotchet which he's sure will pay,
And yield him ten per cent. on quarter-day.

Last scene of all of these eventful stories,
Is the destruction of the builder's glories :
There comes a gust of wind which leaves the lots,
Sans bricks, sans mortar, and sans chimbley-pots.

Presently Robin Hood is required by the stage directions to raise his bow "as Wallack raises his carbine in Massaroni." It is perhaps forgotten now how James Wallack levelled his carbine when he personated the brigand Massaroni.

King Richard, journeying from Palestine, seeks accommodation at the inn at Nottingham. The trumpets announce his approach. He objects to so much flourishing, and desires his devoted attendant, the minstrel Blondel, to bring himself "something very cool and nourishing." Blondel answers :

As quick as thought, or magic of Herr Dobler,
Your Majesty shall have a sherry-cobbler.

Herr Dobler was a popular conjuror and prestidigitator in those times. American drinks and Wenham Lake Ice were new to this country. Certain of the States had left their obligations undischarged, much to the chagrin of investors. Says the King :

America abounds in social hints ;
Her coin is scarce, but I respect her mints ;
On making liquids since her mind is set,
Some day, perhaps, she'll liquidate her debt.

The King was represented by Mr. Alfred Wigan, who, in Cœur de Lion's chain mail and Crusader's surcoat, wore very much the look he was required to assume at the Princess's Theatre some six years later, when he played Richard's son, Philip Falconbridge, to the King John of Mr. Charles Kean. In 1846 Mr. Wigan could not be classed among Shakespearean players. The Baron Front de Bœuf, who also fills the office of Sheriff of Nottingham, is the friend of the usurping Prince John, and the foe, therefore, of King Richard and his faithful outlaw Robin Hood. The King is entertained at the Baron's castle. Robin Hood and his merry men invite themselves to the banquet. The Baron protests. This dialogue follows :

King. Oh, Baron, let them stop !
Baron. Stop ?
King. Aye.
Baron. Stop, thief !
Robin. (*bowing*) This ready courtesy's beyond belief.
A handsome hall ! Baron, I vow you will
Eclipse your peer, the Lord of Rosherville,
The dancing nobleman, whose power we see
Makes even gents dance almost decently.

A certain professor of dancing, master of the ceremonies at Rosherville Gardens, calling himself Baron Nathan, is here referred to. He is little remembered now.

Front de Bœuf invites his guests to dance. Robin asks of Almea: "What shall it be—a Polka or Cellarius?" The Cellarius Waltz was a fashionable dance in 1846. To his comrade Little John, Robin observes:

> On polka points we look to you for law;
> Yours was the first the public ever saw.

Little John was played by the beautiful Miss Fairbrother, a famous columbine and exquisite dancer. The efforts of Miss Fairbrother had made the British public first acquainted with the peculiarities, graceful and otherwise, of the polka, then executed with much toeing and heeling, bending and bowing, sliding and stamping. "Ethiopian Serenaders" were also of recent introduction into England. Their performances are imitated by Abdel-Kader with the bones, and his gnome slave Alfouran—played by Mr. J. W. Collier, an excellent pantomimist—with the banjo. The Baron's hospitality is, of course, merely a pretence. He designs the death of his royal guest. The King returning thanks for the cordial manner in which his health has been proposed and received, resumes his seat. The chair, as it were, empties him into the darkness beneath the stage. This incident imitated an effect in the melodrama of "Clarisse," then popular at the Adelphi. A trap-door revolved, and a chair that went down full, so to speak, immediately returned empty. A murder was supposed to have been accomplished with the aid of an ingenious mechanical device.

Of course the King is not murdered. He is the inmate of a dungeon in the Baron's castle, whence he escapes at last through the aid of his faithful Blondel, a part played and sung by Miss Mary Keeley. Richard joins Robin Hood and his outlaws in Sherwood Forest, and proceeds to lay siege to the Baron's castle. The story now follows, mocking it, the novel of Ivanhoe in relation to the attack upon Torquilstone. The beleaguered Baron—represented by Mr. Frank Matthews—mimics the Richard the Third of the theatre. Here is another quotation:

Enter First Attendant.

First Attendant. Richmond is on the seas, my lord.
Baron. You lie!
It's on the Thames. Learn your geography.

Enter SECOND ATTENDANT.

SECOND ATTENDANT. My lord, the Mayor of Nottingham, John Davies,
Heads a great force of sturdy railway navvies.
And hither comes.
BARON. Indeed, then list to me :
Post to the Earl of Norfolk instantly,
Tell him to come, and all his men to bring,
Nor stop to curry-favour with the king.

In December, 1845, at an agricultural meeting, the Duke of Norfolk of that period had recommended to a hungry peasantry a pinch of curry-powder of his own preparing, as an excellent substitute for beef and beer, and a great stayer of the appetite.

Let no man fail me, if he'd save his bacon.

Enter THIRD ATTENDANT.

THIRD ATTENDANT. My lord, the Mayor of Nottingham is taken.
BARON. Off with——
THIRD ATTENDANT. It's done, my lord.
BARON I'll tear you joint from joint !
You've cut me, sirrah, out of a capital point.
Go, fetch my armour, battle-axe, and casque.
I 'gin to be a weary of my task.
FIRST ATTENDANT. A flag of truce is coming.

Enter FRIAR TUCK.

Nay, it is come.
So benedicite and pax vobiscum.

The siege begins, the archers discharge their arrows, the castle is captured, the defeated Baron is carried below by the gnome Alfouran, and the play ends in a blaze of triumph and red fire.

There were songs and parodies in plenty, set to the music of the past. Tunes soon grow old, and some old tunes have a way of sounding very old indeed. Among the popular airs embellishing the old burlesque of "Robin Hood" were to be found "Such a Getting Up Stairs," "Farewell to the Mountain," "When the Heart of a Man," "Billy Taylor," "Rory O'More," "Meet Me by Moonlight," "Nix my Dolly," sung by Mrs. Keeley, and the "Copenhagen" and "Lieber Augustin" waltzes.

Of the players some few survive; but none are now to be seen upon the stage. A lapse of six-and-thirty years makes a difference !

ATTAR OF ROSE.

(SEE POEM.)

ATTAR OF ROSE.

I PULLED a rose apart
To find its heart;
But nothing found.
Under my cottage eaves
The scented leaves
Floated around.

To gather them again
I tried in vain;
The breeze blew strong.
It left me but the stem,
No hidden gem;
So did I wrong?

I offer this excuse:
With leaves profuse
And perfume rare,
Somehow it won my heart;
I could not part
From flower so fair.

And so I plucked the rose,
And to life's close
Attar will cling;
Thoughts bitter, sweet, and dear,
Of kiss and tear,
Roses will bring.

F. S.

London, July, 1882.

THE PARIS THEATRES.

THAT fraction of the Parisian population which, in its own peculiar language, calls itself "All Paris," and which, in point of fact, numbers about two hundred individuals—or, adopting the learned estimate of the author of "La Dame aux Camélias," let us say three hundred, "so as to hurt nobody's feelings"—all Paris, or at least an appreciative percentage of it, having returned home from country houses and Normandy or Breton bathing-places, the theatrical managers of the most theatrical city in the world have begun the work of the winter season with abundant energy, if not with conspicuous judgment in all cases. Of theatrical management in Paris, indeed, no foreigner can ever hope to fathom the mystery that underlies it and envelops it. The managers themselves do not understand it. It is a temptation, like driving a four-in-hand; everyone thinks he can do it till he has tried the experiment; and even then, sometimes, he thinks he could do it better than somebody else.

Experience never appears to be of any use to a Paris manager; but that is, perhaps, only equivalent to saying that he is a Frenchman, who is at once the most persistent teacher and the worst learner in the world, whose born and bred rage for instructing mankind would almost seem to have incapacitated him for learning anything from anybody, himself not excepted. He believes that Paris is the world, and that, knowing all about "his Paris," it follows that he must know all about all the world. Thus it is that, notwithstanding the enormous inter-communication that has been going on during the past five-and-twenty years between France and England, the Parisian of to-day knows no more of the ways of English men and women than his father before him knew. He travels, as a rule, which his father did not do; but it makes no difference between the knowledge of the two.

The Parisian of to-day comes to London for a week, a fortnight, or even a month; goes back and interlards his talk with scraps of misconstructed English phrases, the exact meaning of which he has not made the least endeavour to learn; probably writes

about the "peculiarities of our good friends, the insulars across the Manche;" and makes us, who read and observe him, wonder whether he is as obviously incapable of understanding what he sees and hears in all other countries he visits, and about which he writes that ever-swelling series of books of travel, observation, and appreciation. However that may be, in regard to English men and manners, it conclusively appears, whenever it pleases him to put them en scène, that observation has not made him in the smallest degree better informed than was his father, or we might say even than his grandfather, to whom the fog-oppressed and suicidically-minded children of "perfidious Albion" were ever and always and only "les Anglaises pour rire."

There is, therefore, nothing to wonder at when we find the latest manager of the Odéon producing with the most perfect good faith a comedy of what he supposes to be English manners, and bearing the thoroughly English title of "Rotten Row." So ultra-English is this play imagined to be, that one of its first-night critics suggested that, really, after having gone to such lengths of realistic treatment of his subject, the author might have gone a step further and written his comedy in the language of London society instead of in that of Paris.

The hero of this superlatively English comedy of manners is a sub-editor of the "Saturday Review," the nephew of a lord, of whom he may become the heir; meanwhile he is very poor, and deeply in love with an unknown beauty whom he has seen riding in Rotten Row. This young lady is engaged to a rich gentleman, bearing the remarkably English name of Mauritius Turney, who is a partner in the bank of Turney & Co. Wishing to propitiate his fiancée the rich young banker engages the poor young sub-editor of the "Saturday Review" to write a novel to be published in the Review under the signature of Mauritius Turney; but the imposition is made manifest to the beautiful horsewoman of Rotten Row, who finds that she adores the writer of that lovely romance and becomes his wife.

A good deal of the action passes in the working salon of the editor of the "Saturday Review," and none of the omniscient Paris critics, whatever they found to object to in regard to the story of the piece, or to its literary treatment, betrayed the least doubt as to the faithfulness of its rendering of English manners. Some of them found it a little dull, and one

remarked that a portion of the audience, probably with a view to giving local colour to the occasion, followed the common English custom of leaving their seats and the theatre before the piece was finished.

At the Gymnase—thanks, it is said, to the warm solicitations of M. Francisque Sarcey—a little comedy in one act, entitled "L'Assassin," has been transplanted from the "Théâtre Impossible" of M. Edmond About to the possible stage with complete success, after waiting five-and-twenty years for the translation. The plot of the "Assassin" is extremely slight and not particularly interesting, but the dialogue is in parts very sparkling, and in the vein of the brilliant writer of "Les Mariages de Paris,"

After producing a series of failures, remarkable from many points of view, and especially for the gratuitous way in which he appeared to be courting misfortune, the manager of the Théâtre des Nations—shortly to be handed over to Madame Sarah Bernhardt, and re-christened Le Théâtre Moderne—has, at last, hit upon a success in a big drama, founded upon a romance by M. Alberic Second, and bearing the title of "La Vicomtesse Alice." The piece is sensational in a high degree, and madness and mad people play the most important parts in it throughout the entire five acts. Much of its success is owing to the remarkable interpretation it receives from the actors. Mr. Mayer ("of London," as the jocular journalists of Paris are fond of designating him) is reported to have purchased of the authors the right to produce "La Vicomtesse Alice" in England and America.

Following closely at the heels of M. Zola as an exponent of what is foolishly called "realism" in art, M. Alexis Bouvier has achieved the unenviable notoriety of—after having first had to come to terms with the Censure—placing before a Paris audience, at the Théâtre du Chateau d'Eau, at least one of the most revolting dramas that have yet found their way to the stage. Every representative and authoritative critic in Paris has boldly denounced this vile piece, entitled "La Dame au Domino Rose," in which the author, to quote "Le Petit Journal," "absolutely ignores the fact that all that may be written in a novel may not always be spoken on the stage; and he piles the horrible upon the revolting, the absurd upon the ridiculous, without in the least caring for the respect which an author owes

to a public that has come to the theatre to be interested, not nauseated."

Two revivals of old plays by Alexandre Dumas père—"Charles VII., chez ses Grands Vassaux," at the Odéon, and the evergreen "Tour de Nesle"—have been adventured, the latter at the Gaîté, with a great outlay of scenic splendour, reminding somebody with a memory that the only latter-day reproduction of this legendary drama which is known to have brought the manager any money, was one on which he had spent not as much, but as little as possible.

Perhaps the completest and best-deserved success of the month has been that of the Vaudeville with "Tête de Linotte," a comedy in three acts, by Théodore Barrière, touched up by M. Gondinet. This wonderfully bright piece—which is sure to find a new home in London—may be briefly described as a laugh in three acts, recalling, without in the least resembling, Sardou's delightful "Pattes de Mouche."

Almost universal regret has been expressed at the production of "Madame Thérèse," a military show-piece, drawn by MM. Erckmann-Chatrian from their well-known story, and mounted after the manner of the plays put forth at the theatre which has, perhaps, surpassed in immensity of display all others in the French capital—the Châtelet. M. Francisque Sarcey indicates in a very few words the exact character of the mistake made by these remarkable writers when he says: "The authors have deceived themselves in trying to put this scene (the most strikingly and purely dramatic in the romance) upon the boards. They have neatly cut it into little bits which are lost upon this vast stage. These two gentlemen, excellent painters of domestic interiors, are Gerard Dows of Alsatian life; but Gerard Dow did not go out of his way to sketch battle-scenes upon his canvas. You witness ceaselessly in 'Madame Thérèse,' some good and brave Alsatians who gossip unlimitedly about their petty personal affairs, and when they have finished their conversation, which interests nobody, they go off; and then is heard behind the scenes, either the sound of the drum, the voice of cannon, or the clatter of horses' hoofs; it is a continuous passage of soldiers, a battle, or an attack on a redoubt, when it is not a ballet. The first two or three tableaux are listened to with some small degree of pleasure; but little by little, weariness gets the upper hand. All this story, which is of

mediocre interest in the book, appears overwhelmingly dull in the form of a drama, and it must be added that the mise en scène of some of the tableaux is altogether childish." If the piece turns out to be a theatrical success, it will probably owe its good fortune to the fact that it offers the sort of attraction that parents seek for their children when they want to "take them to the play;" but as a work of art it is anything but worthy of the authors of "L'Ami Fritz," and "Les Rantzau."

The author of "La Noce Tocassin," M. Henry Buquet, has determined to be original, at whatever cost, in this the latest example of the very special kind of piece demanded by the management of the Fantaisies-Parisiennes; so, having determined to write a "folie in four acts," he has produced a work absolutely devoid of any discoverable sense, in which he makes his heroine, Mdlle. Eulalie Tocassin, in her bridal dress, at one time descend into a sewer to fish out her fiancé, and at another clamber over house-tops to bring down her own father. "Is it worth saying anything more about such a piece of utter rubbish?" very reasonably asks the critic of the "Figaro."

MM. Chivot and Duru have gone near to score a big success —have, indeed, very possibly scored it—at the Palais-Royal with "Le Truc d'Arthur," in three acts. It is like any number of pieces that have been played on the same boards, in point of donnée; but the authors have yet found means to give to the old materials a new arrangement, and to present them with a sparkle and gaiety entirely their own. The foundation of their plot is the idea of a master, who, to get rid of the too-pressing exactions of a lady, changes costumes and places with his valet de chambre, who, like another Ruy Blas, takes advantage of his disguise to make advances to the lady on his own account. The oddest surprises and most comical dilemmas follow in quick succession, especially in the second act, which, on the first performance, evoked such continuous roars of laughter, as to leave the audience with hardly a good laugh available for the drolleries of the concluding act.

C. S. C.

GEORGE FREDERICK COOKE.

THE following interesting account of George Frederick Cooke* appeared at the time of his visit to America in 1810:

The most interesting event that has yet occurred in the history of the American stage, has recently taken place. It will at once be understood that we allude to the arrival on these shores of the celebrated actor, George Frederick Cooke; an event which has occasioned infinite joy in the theatrical circles, and not less astonishment in all who have heard of that extraordinary man's talents. That a performer who has for years been more than any other distinguished by public favour at home, and had it in his power to acquire there an annual income of five thousand pounds sterling, should in advanced life traverse the Atlantic, and migrate to a country so remote from his own, on a professional speculation, was a thing apparently so much at variance with reason and probability, that any man who but a week before it happened had been hardy enough to suggest a likelihood of its taking place, would be considered either a fool or a banterer.

When the first intelligence of Mr. Cooke's having embarked for America reached Philadelphia, though it was stated upon good authority, the incredulity of the people resisted every assurance of the fact, and it was not till a detailed account of his having performed the character of Richard III. on the stage of New York appeared in the daily prints of that city that the public doubts upon the subject were entirely dispelled. That this great and unexpected acquisition makes not only the most brilliant era in the stage history of the United States, but holds forth to the old world an incontestable proof of the unexampled advancement

* Born in 1756; died at New York, September 8th, 1812.

of this young country in taste, refinement, and literature, as well as in opulence and prosperity, cannot be denied, nor do we think there is any candid American who will dissent from us when we affirm, that from this circumstance, so very flattering to our national feelings, the thanks of the country are due to Mr. Cooper in the first instance; perhaps in some degree, too, to the liberality of some other managers in encouraging him to the execution of that laudable but hazardous enterprise.

In point of pecuniary risk, the public will (at least we hope and believe so) indemnify Mr. Cooper. The sum he has undertaken to pay Mr. Cooke, though it would have been a very inadequate temptation to a prudent man in that gentleman's circumstances to leave his country, is immensely great; yet the praise due to Mr. Cooper for his spirit in that respect is small when compared with the applause he merits on another and a nobler principle. The day before Mr. Cooke's arrival, Cooper stood confessedly at the head of the American stage—he now stands but second. Let it be remembered, too, that no man more fairly appreciated, or has more liberally spoken of, the great superiority of Cooke than he has; so that when he resolved upon bringing him over to this country, he was perfectly sensible that he was introducing not merely a superior that would outshine him, but an actor whose extraordinary powers must open to the American public a new and far more clear and correct view than they could ever have had before, of what is excellent and what censurable in the art.

In a word, one who would hold up to them a light, to which a person in Mr. Cooper's situation, if he were actuated only by selfish views, would not be very desirous to help them to. Garrick, with all his might, would as soon have thrust one of his fingers into the fire as have done the same. On the best grounds, therefore, we say that the country is largely indebted to Mr. Cooper, whose conduct in the business can scarcely be overrated, displaying a liberal spirit, and a dignified scorn of those mean jealousies which are too generally found to taint the hearts of men in all professions, and certainly in none more than in that to which he belongs.

Having discharged this debt of justice to Mr. Cooper, we will say a few words of the great and accomplished actor he has brought among us. Though we have not seen Mr. Cooke since

his arrival in America, we know him perfectly well as an actor. For many years he was a subject of admiration, a constant source of delight, an inexhaustible theme, and affluent topic of critical examination and consequent praise to some of the most enlightened critics in London, whose opinions respecting him were exactly the same as ours. There are few characters he has played in which we have not seen him frequently, and a thousand times heard his merits and defects in them canvassed; we therefore make no scruple of speaking of him by anticipation, and confidently assert that there have been few men in the world whom Nature has more fully endowed for the profession of an actor, not one now living who possesses such ample means of giving satisfaction to a critical mind and uncorrupted natural taste, when his talents have fair play, and are left unobscured by occasional infirmity.

It was at an advanced time of life he first appeared in the British metropolis; as in America, so there, he made his début in Richard, of which character he may be said to have ever since held the exclusive possession. At once his powers operated upon the London audience in a way unexampled in the annals of the British theatre, and scarcely to be credited if not demonstrated by frequent matter of fact. Never in his long and illustrious life, marked as it was by public favour and admiration, was Garrick permitted to take the slightest liberty with the people: had he but once been guilty of a certain irregularity, he would have been banished from the stage; but such is the fascination in which this favourite has for years held the public mind, that he has done even as it has pleased his fancy, without materially shaking, or in any great degree impairing, his popularity. This is a circumstance than which nothing imaginable can convey a more forcible idea of the extent and power of his genius; and it is only with that view we advert to it.

From a friend at New York, to whom we had often communicated our opinions of Cooke, we received a letter written as it should seem on the very night of that actor's first appearance there in Richard III.; part of which letter we offer to the perusal of our readers, as it contains some strictures as just and accurate as if the author had studied Cooke for years.

"I am just now returned from the theatre, and late though it is, cannot bring myself to go to bed till I have set down

for your perusal a few of the multitude of thoughts and new ideas with which I have been impressed by the performance of Cooke in Richard III. I must in candour first own to you that I always thought your description of his powers greatly exaggerated, and (you must not be affronted) in my bosom attributed to over-wrought national prejudice, your assertion that we on this side of the Atlantic had not yet had an opportunity of seeing and therefore could not form an adequate idea of the perfection to which the great actors of the good old school, as you used to call it, had carried the art. I now confess to you that the highest summit of my conceptions of the subject fell infinitely short of the excellence of this extraordinary man. Extraordinary, indeed, in many respects, as I understand, but I verily believe most extraordinary as an actor.

All I have seen before was boy's play to this night's exhibition: yet an English gentleman who sat by my side, and was, I believe, a competent judge, assured me that Richard was by no means considered as Cooke's best character by the more enlightened critics. He adduced the opinion of Mrs. Inchbald, to which, since my return home, I have referred, and find it exactly concurs with his: you may see it in her prefatory remarks to the play of Richard III. in her 'British Theatre.' He owned, indeed, that the British people in general gave Cooke precedence to all other actors in this character. In the course of the performance, however, he concurred in the applause so lavishly bestowed on Cooke, and in one part only, viz. where Richard starts up from his frightful dream in the tent, hinted the superiority of any other actor. In that part he said Kemble took the lead. I cannot well conceive it, but I am now prepared to believe anything.

"Cooke's figure aided by dress and fictitious deformity, and his wonderful face, so perfectly fill up the idea of Richard, that I am disposed to think, if Shakespeare were to rise from the dead he would own him the exact representative of his imagination. Cooke's Richard is not an ordinary hunch-back, dwarfed and feeble with deformity. A formidable brawny military figure, well fitted for achievements in arms, and a face strongly marked, with eyes piercing and lively, a very large Roman nose, and a long and broad protuberant chin, conveyed at his very first entrance such a characteristic idea of the formidable crook-

backed tyrant as I had never before imagined likely to exist. Had he only walked in as a masquerade figure of Richard without uttering a word, it would have been more to my satisfaction than the whole of any Richard I have seen. He spoke—his voice finished the picture; for though eminently variable as well as powerful, he had either from nature or misuse of it (it may be one of his perfections that he can assume it when necessary), a harshness truly characteristic of Richard. It occasionally 'grated harsh thunder.'

"I never before witnessed a soliloquy spoken on the stage so as to represent solitary self-conference. Cooke really appeared alone. Of the emphatic force as well as the distinctness, correctness, and precision of his speech, you must hear it to form any thing like an adequate conception. Were it not for the natural ease with which it flows from him it might pass for too precise; but that notion is at once scouted by the felicity with which he delivered himself. I own that there is a deficiency of gracefulness in his figure unsuitable to the representative of a prince of our highly refined modern times, but which I think allies him more closely to the coarse age that Richard lived in, and to the brutal character depicted by the poet. So characteristic a personal toute ensemble, I imagine has very seldom, perhaps never, been exhibited on any stage.

"Were I to enumerate all the beauties of his performance I should recite almost every sentence of the character; some parts, however, were astonishing, prodigious, or to use your own words, frightfully great. Such I take to be his furious rejection of Buckingham's suit.

"I'm busy—thou troublest me—I'm not i' th' vein.

"And such, too, is his scene with Stanley, particularly the diabolical sardonic grin and tone with which he says, 'Well as you guess.'

"But of the whole of this wonderful piece of acting, that which seems to me to leave all the others behind, indeed to beggar the most affluent description, is the first scene of the fourth act in which he alternately meditates and gives instructions to Catesby and Norfolk. Here the powers of the superior actor were visible to every eye. As was said of Garrick, by a man who had been born deaf, his face was a language. That short scene, though

containing in the whole but sixteen lines, employed him many minutes, during every instant of which his countenance displayed an infinite variety of feelings and emotions, making his silent meditation more eloquent and impressive even than the language of the poet."

Assuredly the Richard of Cooke, though superior to any other, is not his best performance. There is an inequality in it which cannot be perceived in his Iago, his Kitely, or his Sir Pertinax Mac Sycophant, in which last character he is acknowledged to surpass Macklin himself. And here, in justice to the play of "The Man of the World," and still more to the liberality and good sense of the Scotch, we must remark that in no part of the British Empire, not in London or even in Dublin, are the characters of Sir Pertinax or Sir Archy Mac Sarcasm more admired or more often called for than in Edinburgh. Macklin in his lifetime, and Cooke since, having been frequently engaged to go there for the express purpose of gratifying that judicious and enlightened audience with those satires upon, not the Scotch nation, but some well-known bad members of it.

But though Richard is not Cooke's best, it is still a voluptuous dramatic feast. His Shylock is not less so. His Iago is perfect, uniform and equal. His Cato, King John, Zanga, Orsino, and Sciolto, too, are inimitably fine, but that in which he chiefly excels is in the delineation of subtle, complicated villainy. In Iago, for instance, he makes a deep impression; and here, though so uniformly excellent, there are some passages in which he displays more than usual ingenuity and natural force. One is his treacherous apology mixed up with accusation of Cassio; and we venture to say that there is nothing in the histrionic art to surpass, if to equal, the address of his underplay to Othello.

In several of his comic characters there is a rich luxuriance of humour and expression, without the slightest tincture of buffoonery or trick. Cooke never has recourse to the paltry (unpardonable, too, as we think) expedients of playing the fool to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh. No; he steadily adheres to the letter and spirit of his author, and rests confidently secure of producing all the desirable effect by the plain, unadulterated, natural exercise of his own genius and organs. His Falstaff, though it essentially differs from that of Henderson and every other actor we have seen, is no doubt more conformable

to the ideas of Shakespeare. Any one who has considered the character well, must have observed that there is not a particle of good nature in the composition of it. Falstaff is jovial, selfishly; but even in his merriment he discloses a malignant, sarcastic spirit, which he lets forth in satire, jibe, and calumny. Cooke gives the drollery of the fat knight such a rich characteristic expression of that kind with voice and face and emphasis, as no man, since Quin, has even thought of attempting.

There is this difference between Cooke and almost all other actors. He resorts to no stage trick, and uses no unnatural gesticulations or mechanical dispositions of his limbs; practises no grimace; has no affected pauses, starts, attitudes, or intonations; but acts "e'en like the folks of this world." He neither frisks about the stage nor whirls his arms, nor does, in a word, as most players do, everything that nobody does in common life. Quick, who was indebted to old Macklin for his rise, once waited on the veteran to get his instructions how to play Mordecai, the Jew, in his farce of "Love-a-la-Mode." "Pray, sir," said the old man, "do you yet know the first qualification of an actor?" "Perhaps not, sir," said Quick, "but if you will have the goodness to tell me, I will endeavour to practise it." "Why, sir, it is contained in one short sentence, 'Learn to stand still!'" This part of the art, which one would think easy enough, if it were not so seldom found, Cooke possesses among others.

In general, whatever be the character which Cooke plays, it is, in his treatment, an exquisite picture of nature, in the pourtraying of which, disdaining detail, and careless of the elaborated refinements of the art, he contrives by one bold and vigorous, yet simple outline, and a few masterly touches of the pencil, to give the most grand, perfect, and impressive likeness imaginable. And in a word, as he assuredly is the safest and perhaps the only safe model now living, by the study of which young actors can improve themselves in their profession, we strongly recommend Mr. Cooke to their particular attention.

LAST NIGHT.

LAST night you came and woke me from a sleep
Of dead delights, old loves, and passions past.
I was alone, climbing a toilsome steep
Broken with stones, with shadows overcast;
The sun had sunk, there was no more to do;
This was my dream, how did it seem to you
Last night?

Last night I looked into your loving eyes,
Half closed with dew like roses in the morn,
I took your fingers then, and no surprise
Played in their touch, for love was yet unborn.
And thus we stood, light breaking through the blue,
I could not wait, did it seem wrong to you
Last night?

Last night we crossed the bridge that stems the stream
Dividing desert waste from flower land;
We looked no longer back, but as in dream
Strayed on into love's garden, hand in hand.
We could not speak, delight hid half the view,
Then came the kiss; love, was it sweet to you
Last night?

Last night I found the lady of my dreams,
One who has haunted me these weary years,
I know her not, and still again she seems
To stand between a life of toil and tears,
How will it end? I cannot tell, can you?
Kiss me again, just as you used to do
Last night!

September, 1882. C. S.

BEATRICE.

For here's a paper, written in his hand,
A halting sonnet of his own pure brain,
Fashion'd to Beatrice.

—"Much Ado About Nothing," Act V., Sc. 4.

WINSOME and witty, womanly withal,
Petulant, proud, capricious, yet so sweet;
Fearing love's forfeit—fainéant to escheat
Your mirth and maidenhood, yet yielding all
In brave surrender at my Lord Love's call;
Caring no whit for suitor at your feet,
Wooed by no sighs, nor won by fond entreat,
Albeit most witching in your gentle fall!
Dear Beatrice, a secret in your ear!—
When stealing from your woodbine coverture,
You thought yourself alone, and did confess
Your love—without or pride or maiden fear,
I saw you, heard you speak; altho', for sure,
Where I played eavesdropper you'll never guess.

Lyceum Theatre, Oct. 11th, 1882. W. C. K. W.

Our Play-Box.

"FOR EVER."

A Sensational Drama, in Seven Acts, by Paul Meritt and George Conquest.
Produced at the Surrey Theatre, Monday, October 2nd, 1882.

Sir Philip Daremount	Mr. A. C. Hatton.
Jasper Daremount	Mr. Algernon Syms.
Julian Daremount	Mr. T. F. Nye.
Abel Rockley	Mr. C. Cruikshanks.
Ben Hackman	Mr. F. Dobell.
Dick Sparrow	Mr. C. A. Somerset.
Tim Tiffany	Mr. A. Rousby.
Doctor Coldways	Mr. J. Nelson.
Justice Wigney	Mr. Hyde.
Mr. Coleridge	Mr. Taylor.
Pepper Stubbs	Mr. Carlisle.
Bill Filey	Mr. T. Herman.
Joe Mugford	Mr. Seek.
Billy Buttons	Mr. A. de Voy.
Mr. Tarn	Mr. Clark.
Mosher	Mr. Piper.
Spudding	Mr. Fox.
Theophilus Potkins	Mr. Percy Bell.
Zacky Pastrana	Mr. Geo. Conquest.
Ruth Rockley	Miss B. Titheradge.
Phillis	Miss Alice Raynor.
Mrs. Patcham	Miss L. Claremont.
Polly Patcham	Miss Harriet Claremont.

I consider that this play stands condemned on the evidence of its own advertisements. I have no wish to enter into any discussion on the subject, but if people who profess to have

the interest of the stage at heart are willing to create a morb and fictitious excitement by such means they are welcome to their opinion. It is not at all a bad melodrama, as melodramas go, as it could not fail to be when constructed by men of such vast practice and experience as Mr. George Conquest and Mr. Paul Meritt. But the radical fault of the composition is the attempt to create dramatic interest by the unwholesome love of a demi-savage for a young and pretty girl. The suggestiveness that arises from such a position cannot be discussed without offence. The better such a part as the erratic man-monkey is acted the more offensive it becomes, and this must be patent to everybody. No one admires the high intelligence—nay, sometimes the genius—of Mr. George Conquest more than I do. His acting at times amounts to inspiration; but I hold that his idea of the man-monkey, however clever, has failed in effect. Not all the audiences that ever assembled within the walls of a theatre, or all the sensation advertisements ever penned, will persuade me to the contrary. The only merit of the play is that it will bring these unwholesome sensations to a close. There are some things too serious to jest about, and it was high time that someone should speak out and express an opinion that was pretty generally felt. The showman and the critic must always be in antagonism, only the showman has the advantage of being able to blow his trumpet a little the loudest of the two. But there is such a thing, let me remind him, as crying for sale the inhabitants of the sea that are in danger of being condemned by the inspector of nuisances! The thing that pleased me most about the play, apart from the care and cleverness with which it was put before the audience, was the acting of Miss Titheradge and Miss Alice Raynor. They were both very clever, and I look forward to their advance in the profession with pleasure and certainty.

"MR. GUFFIN'S ELOPEMENT."

A Musical Farce, in One Act, by Arthur Law and George Grossmith.
First produced at the Alexandra Theatre, Liverpool, on Friday, September 29th, 1882.
Produced in London, at Toole's Theatre, on Saturday, October 7th, 1882.

Mr. Benjamin Guffin Mr. J. L. Toole.	Robert Beate ... ... Mr. W. E. Brunton.
Mr. Collingwood Hannibal Trumpington Sampson ... ... Mr. E. D. Ward	Mrs. Trundel ... ... Miss E. Johnstone.
	Miss Crump ... ... Miss Emily Thorne.
	Susan ... ... Miss Isa Marsden.

Mr. J. L. Toole, fresh from his country tour, and as irresistibly humorous as ever, opened his theatre according to promise with

"The Upper Crust," and a new one-act piece called "Mr. Guffin's Elopement." Though the plot is but slight, the material is made the most of, and the piece contains several exceedingly comical situations. Mr. Guffin is in love with a lady of a very romantic disposition, who objects to being married in the ordinary humdrum way, and insists on an elopement. In order to meet her views Guffin arranges to go to the Red Lion, a way-side inn, where she promises to join him. On his arrival at the rendezvous Guffin has the misfortune to be taken for a burglar, and the police are sent for in order to arrest him. Whilst awaiting the arrival of the representatives of the law his woes are increased by meeting with a cousin of his fiancée, who works upon his fears by threatening what he will do with a certain Mr. Guffin when he chances to meet him. Guffin's lady-love then appears upon the scene, and upon finding that he has previously been enamoured of the landlady of the Red Lion, refuses to marry him, and bestows her hand upon her cousin, which brings the trifle to a very pleasant conclusion. The music is pretty, and contains several very tuneful numbers, the most successful being "The Speaker's Eye," sung in the drollest manner by Mr. Toole, who, as Guffin, is the life and soul of the piece. The libretto is worthy of the music, and is bright and sparkling throughout.

"Girls and Boys," a new and original comedy in three acts, by Mr. A. W. Pinero, was announced for production at Toole's Theatre, on Tuesday, October 31st, too late for notice in this number of The Theatre.

"THE OVERLAND ROUTE."

A Comedy, in Three Acts, by the late Tom Taylor.

Originally produced at the Haymarket Theatre on Thursday, February 23rd, 1860.

Revived at the Haymarket Theatre, Saturday, October 7th, 1882.

Sir Solomon Fraser...	Mr. Alfred Bishop	Mr. Hardisty	Mr. Gerrard.
Major McTurk... ...	Mr. F. Everill.	Tottle	Mr. S. Dawson.
Captain Clavering ...	Mr. Smedley.	Moleskin	Mr. Fabert.
Captain Sebright ...	Mr. Vernon.	Limpet	Mr. Elliot.
Mr. Colepepper ...	Mr. C. Brookfield.	Mrs. Sebright	Mrs. Bancroft.
Mr. Lovibond	Mr. David James.	Mrs. Lovibond	Mrs. John Wood.
Tom Dexter	Mr. Bancroft.	Mary Colepepper ...	Miss Tilbury.
Captain Smart	Mr. Carne.	Mrs. Rabbits	Miss Maria Daly.
Grimwood		Miss N. Phillips.	

The revival of this play has given rise to some thoughts on past acting as contrasted with the present.

Only two-and-twenty years have passed over our heads since Tom Taylor's "Overland Route" was first produced in the old Buckstonian Haymarket Theatre, where folks went with great

pleasure to get an honest laugh after dinner, and were not so "mighty particular" about stage art as we are to-day. They took things as they found them; had a strong conservative attachment for old favourites; when they saw comic acting they did not prate about exaggeration or paralyse the actors with such a nervous dread of overdoing that they became shadows instead of substance; they never yielded themselves to the abandonment of boredom, and infinitely preferred a rump-steak and a bottle of port wine to follow as a preparation to the play to any conceivable amount of cigarettes and lemon squashes.

But it must not be imagined that it necessarily follows from this that "The Overland Route" was a good play in the sense that Sheridan's or Goldsmith's plays, or, indeed, Boucicault's "London Assurance" are good plays, robust and human and interesting enough to be revived at any time, and to secure applause. There have, after all, been very few plays of that kind written in this century. It was a good play, then, because it served its purpose, a good play in the same kind of degree that "An Unequal Match" was a good play; it was written to fit, and it fitted exactly, those who made it famous. The author, an experienced, educated, capable, and observant gentleman, who had more tact than wit, more adroitness than brilliancy, and more industry than genius, made "The Overland Route" as a tailor would make a coat. It was tried on and it fitted extremely well. There were various oddities of shapes and figures, of manner and method, in that old Haymarket company. There was Charles Mathews, the ever young, the "hop, skip, and jump," and consistently mercurial Charles, the cheery, breezy chorus of any comedy, whom the people loved because he was Charles Mathews; there was the unctuous, twinkling-eyed, full-throated John Baldwin Buckstone, whose very voice was so redolent of humour that the audience burst out into a fit of laughter three seconds at least before his face appeared, an actor whose pronounced manner was his greatest virtue, but who was never called to task for his mannerisms that were the people's delight; there was Buckstone's exact opposite in manner and style, a most wholesome and welcome contrast to his chief, in the dry, pedantic, precise, and sententious Compton, one of the most mannered actors who ever trod a stage, and one of the most popular; and, amongst many others, there was Rogers, with the ponderous voice and

elephantine ways, who, like Robert Romer at another theatre, became a favourite because the ear had been accustomed to his vocal tricks and stolid method.

Twenty-two years have gone, and all these welcome comedians have gone home. But they were the comedians for whom Mr. Tom Taylor arranged the conversational panorama called "The Overland Route." It can scarcely be called a play, for it has no beginning, middle, or ending; its whole interest is episodical. It has no backbone; it is invertebrate; the attention is not concentrated on a leading idea; it fitfully amuses, it does not focus. But what did that matter in February, 1860? Was not Charles Mathews on the stage to patter off yards of prose as Tom Dexter, or everybody's friend, to run in and out of the scene like a good-humoured busybody, chaffing the men, flirting with the women, saving lives at sea, diving into holds of wrecked vessels after missing documents, setting people by the ears and making peace again, the life and soul and spirit of the play. Call this needy surgeon, promoted from the steerage to the saloon, an adventurer, or Flibbertigibbet, or Tom Dexter, or anything else—he was Charles Mathews.

And then Buckstone! What a part this Mr. Lovibond—the hen-pecked, cowed individual, the luckless wretch who ships in the alias as a forger, and is handcuffed for his pains—was for the most eccentric and genial comedian of his time. Who that saw it will ever forget that comical figure, frightfully sea-sick, appearing on the stage in a white cotton nightcap and flannel dressing-gown, with a gash in his throat made by shaving, and the very picture of wretchedness? Who that ever heard it can fail to remember that one sentence as Buckstone delivered it, and as only Buckstone could deliver it, "She's an angel!—better than an angel! She hasn't any wings to fly away with, and she *has* something to sit down upon!" Such a sentence was inevitable when Buckstone was acting. It was not Mr. Lovibond, a character drawn from the study of life or human nature, but Buckstone in comical circumstances, Buckstone sea-sick and in handcuffs. All the rest of this "glorious company" were well cared for. Compton was the dry, yellow-skinned Indian resident, who lost his front teeth in the wreck of the P. and O. steamer, and cut such a comical figure; and Rogers was a hectoring bully who turned out an abject sneak and stole the ship's stores; and that fine old actor, Mr. Chippendale, the Sir Peter and Sir Anthony of his company, did not disdain

the small part of a quarrelsome old man. The public saw their favourite, and that was enough.

The fine old acting spirit of the play is chiefly sustained by Mrs. Bancroft as Mrs. Sebright, and by Mrs. John Wood as Mrs. Lovibond. We have no better comedy acting on the stage than that nor are we likely to have. They only offend the superfine gentlemen who have prated about exaggeration till they have reduced comedy to the consistency of a sucked orange. The nonsense that has been talked of excess has threatened to take all colour out of our acting altogether. I don't advocate rough and tumble horseplay, or clowning or pantomime in comedy. I am no partisan for athletics being substituted for art, nor do I desire a comedian to rival the Haulon-Lees or Mr. George Conquest. But the scene between Mrs. John Wood and Mrs. Bancroft in this play is pure comedy and perfectly legitimate. Mr. David James, another excellent comedian, is accused of exaggeration! In Heaven's name why? He follows Buckstone in Lovibond, and he makes his audience laugh. What more can an actor do? I must say that I consider it a distinctly funny performance, but Mr. David James is far more than a merely funny actor. He has a wider range than that. Mr. Bancroft's Dexter must be added to the good results of this revival. He plays it with excellent taste and animal spirits, and makes more of a man and an Englishman of him than Charles Mathews ever did. Charles Mathews was Charles Mathews; Mr. Bancroft is Tom Dexter; that is just the difference between them.

Mr. Alfred Bishop and Mr. Brookfield, as the two old men, are minute, clever, and painstaking as ever, but they will have to paint with bolder and broader effect in order to succeed at the Haymarket Theatre. The performances of Mr. Smedley as Captain Clavering, of Mr. Fabert as the Detective, a very neat and promising touch of character acting, and of Miss Tilbury as Mary Colepepper, gave me great pleasure because they were natural and never overdone. The "old days" could have produced nothing so good as we see now in minor characters.

Better stage mounting or stage management could not be desired than are found here. The shipwreck is as well managed an effect as I have ever seen.

"ON CONDITION."

An Operetta in One Act, by Robert Reece. Music by Herr Meyer Lütz.

Produced at the Opera Comique Theatre on Monday, October 9th, 1882.

Felix	Miss Alice Aynsley Cook.	Mousse	Miss Emma D'Auban
Paul l'Esparre ...	Miss Katie Logan.	Jacques	Miss Ada West.
Celestine l'Esparre...	Miss Edith Vane.	Mrs. Jarley	Miss Bessie Foote.
Amelia	Miss Fanny Howell.	Lucien	Miss Dolly Goddard
Julia	Miss Clara Douglas	Louis...	Miss Ada Hogarth.
Millefleurs	Miss A. Mowbray.	François	Miss Lizzie Birkett.
Mayor	Miss Rose Arnoldi.	Babette	Miss Lizzie Comyns.
		Lucie...	Miss E. Dumas.

The rather curious experiment of giving a performance entirely by ladies has not been unsuccessful at the Opera Comique. Indeed, there is no reason why such an entertainment should not be well supported, for, as presented by Miss Lila Clay, it contains a varied and original form of amusement. "On Condition," the operetta by Mr. Robert Reece and Herr Meyer Lütz which now commences the entertainment, is not, it must be confessed, of the most brilliant order, but it serves to interest and amuse the spectator who is not over critical. The plot is simple. An eccentric young gentleman has pretended that he has gone to another and a better world, and in distributing his property amongst a quarrelsome trio of relations it is discovered that the eccentric one has inserted a clause in his will making it necessary for his relatives, if they wish to inherit his fortune, to disguise themselves in suits of the old-fashioned harlequin style of dress. After due deliberation, the ridiculous costumes are donned, and then, of course, the gentleman who is supposed to be dead turns up alive and well, and the avaricious relations are discomfited. Some of Herr Lütz's music is very melodious, and it was done full justice to by Miss Alice Aynsley Cook, Miss Edith Vane, and Miss Clara Douglas. Besides the operetta there is a miscellaneous entertainment which includes many attractive songs and much pleasing music. Particularly successful in this were Miss Alice Aynsley Cook, Miss Emma D'Auban, Miss Fanny Howell, Miss Clara Douglas, and Miss Cora Cardigan. Miss Clay deserves credit for her capital pianoforte playing, and for her skill as conductor of the orchestra of ladies, as well as for her taste in devising this interesting programme. Mention should also be made of an American boot dance by Miss Emma D'Auban and company, which is danced in coloured lights to some exceedingly pretty music.

"MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING."

Shakespeare's Comedy, revived at the Lyceum Theatre, on Wednesday, October 11th, 1882.

Benedick ... ... Mr. Henry Irving.	Dogberry ... ... Mr. S. Johnson.
Don Pedro... ... ... Mr. W. Terriss.	Verges... ... ... Mr. S. Calhaem.
Don John ... ... Mr. Chas. Glenny.	Seacol ... ... Mr. Archer.
Claudio ... ... Mr. F. Robertson.	Oatcake ... ... Mr. Harbury.
Leonato ... ... Mr. Fernandez.	Sexton... ... ... Mr. Carter.
Antonio ... ... Mr. H. Howe.	Messenger ... ... Mr. Haviland.
Friar ... ... Mr. T. Mead.	Boy ... ... Miss Kate Brown.
Balthazar ... ... Mr. J. Robertson.	Hero ... ... Miss Millward.
Borachio ... ... Mr. Tyars.	Margaret ... ... Miss Harwood.
Conrade ... ... Mr. Hudson.	Ursula... ... ... Miss G. Payne.
Beatrice ... ... Miss Ellen Terry.	

Benedick and Beatrice, the blessed (benedictus) and the blesser—what shall be said at the outset of the hero and heroine conceived by Shakespeare in the very zenith of his dramatic and poetic powers? Are they, indeed, the hero and heroine at all of that enchanting comedy "Much Ado About Nothing," and not mere subordinate actors in a simple story that is spun from the sentimental loves of Claudio and Hero? Is it true that the spectator is alone concerned with a vain, chattering "marriage-hating Benedick," and the attention solely aroused by a "furiously anti-nuptial Beatrice"? Had Shakespeare no deeper design, no truer insight into human character, than the stage figures as they are ordinarily presented to us—the talkative misogynist and the terrible termagant that have been tacitly accepted through want of thought or the influence of an unyielding tradition? The greater part of a first night's brilliant audience at the Lyceum must have been puzzled with some such reflections as these before they took their seats to watch carefully and wait for the result of Mr. Henry Irving's last, and in many respects most remarkable, Shakespearian revival.

There has been no manager in our time—and we say it with all respect to the memories of Macready, Charles Kean, and Samuel Phelps—who, having got the ear of the public, was so determined as has been Mr. Irving to take Shakespeare as his text in preference to tradition. The Shakespeare of the stage is not the Shakespeare of the poet. Thanks to Mr. Irving, in this period of greater intellectual thought we have seen on the Lyceum stage the explosion of many dramatic heresies. He has cut himself adrift from the fantastic improvements of David Garrick and saved us from the remorseless editings of Colley Cibber. The changes effected in the long list of Lyceum acting editions have not been for the mere love of change; they have not been due to the vanity of the actor, or the unwholesome pandering to theatrical effect.

We may think what we like of the new Hamlet, Richard, Macbeth, Shylock, Othello, Iago, and Romeo; but at least this may be said, that one and all are more intelligible beings in action and in impulse when read by the light of Shakespeare than when distorted and disfigured by the clumsiness of editors, and the cheap fireworks of tradition. Mr. Irving has, at any rate, decided the question whether Shakespeare should be for the study or the stage by bringing the student's Shakespeare as near to the footlights as practical considerations would allow. No enthusiast could do more, no ardent lover of Shakespeare could desire less.

Who and what, then, are this Benedick and Beatrice, as designed by Shakespeare, and evidenced by the text? Is the one a mere conceited, self-sufficient woman-hater, and the other, as Campbell calls her, "an odious woman," a lady-scold, a termagant, a Tartar, and a shrew? Is it not possible to find in the play, with all its enchanting variety, incidents bringing out by distinct and natural gradations a profound seriousness lying beneath all the superficial levity seen at first in the hero and heroine? Is there not, in the development of the characters of Beatrice and Benedick, "a partial antipathy converted into a perfect sympathy," a war between a man and woman who "all but" liked one another at the outset, and ended by marrying and living happily ever afterwards? Did Shakespeare mean what he said when he described his Beatrice as "a merry-hearted, pleasant-spirited lady," never "sad but when she sleeps, and not ever sad then; for I have heard my daughter say she hath often dreamed of unhappiness, and waked herself with laughing;" or was she the "odious" and "insolent" woman that the stage has decided her to be? Is it to be held true that "there is a kind of merry war betwixt Signior Benedick and her; they never meet but there is a skirmish of wit between them;" or do the spectators merely behold a cat-and-dog fight, ending in a union that will only result in a "predestinate scratched face?" Is the purpose of the dramatist confined to illustrating a nagging brawl between two commonplace people, or to showing the "whole ardour and ingenuity of a clever bright-witted woman exerting themselves to humble and silence, if possible, the satirical loquacity of a vivacious cavalier"?

Pressing as these contradictory views must have been on the anxious and interested spectator who came to enjoy, and in enjoying to learn, the curtain had scarcely risen before all doubts

about the matter were immediately solved. That Mr. Irving would invest Benedick with a curious and fantastic humour, and that Miss Ellen Terry would endow Beatrice with singular charm and gaiety, were foregone conclusions. The comedy of the one and the other must be familiar to most play-goers by this time — a comedy as rich as it is refined. But few except those who have waited, and waited in vain, for Mr. Irving's Jaques and Miss Terry's Rosalind, could have hoped for more intellectual enjoyment than is contained in their Benedick and Beatrice.

The sumptuous revival by Mr. Henry Irving of this wise and witty comedy has, at any rate, proved to public satisfaction that Shakespeare, if properly understood, is an evergreen. The simile is surely not inapt or strained. We shut up a green fir-tree in a box-room, lumber-place, or garret, the very tree round which the children had danced at Christmas-time, the plant just borrowed from the young plantation, and what comes to it? It browns, it saddens; it withers, and it dies. But plant it out, give it light and air, return it to its native soil, and it recovers its freshness. It is this light and air that has been given to "Much Ado About Nothing," and persuaded us of its vitality; it is this harmonising the play to modern taste and sentiment that causes its wit and wisdom to fall upon the ear as if it were written but yesterday for our enjoyment; it is this careful study of the highest principles of dramatic effect that sets idea in action and invigorates the imagination.

How often has not Shakespeare suffered for sins both of omission and commission on the part of his interpreters and exponents? We throw away his beauties on ignorant and indifferent performers; we mumble and de-poetise his text; we fail to apply him to modern taste and circumstance; we blindly follow traditions, often as senseless as they are ugly; we take him up with half-hearted energy, and relinquish him with a sigh of relief, and then it is considered wonderful that Shakespeare spells ruin and bankruptcy as well. What author, living or dead, would not spell ruin under similar conditions? Like other everlastings and evergreens, Shakespeare wants light and air. Apply them, and what follows? The poet's vitality surprises no one more than his most reverent worshippers. Take this play of "Much Ado About Nothing," seen on our stage many a

time and often, acted for benefits, familiar enough to leading actors and actresses who have a theatrical and superficial admiration for Benedick and Beatrice; and when before, may we ask, have so many beauties and ideas been unfolded from the text?

Who could have imagined that so many deep and pressing thoughts of solemn meaning could have come from the picture of the grand old cathedral at Messina, charging the mind with love and hate, and pity and despair, as we watch and understand the crushed heart of the tender Hero; the eloquent indignation of the misguided Claudio; the pathetic devotion of the grand old father, Leonato; the comfort of trust in those last beautiful words of the Friar, "Have patience and endure;" and, most important of all, the presence of a great and common grief that turns the partial antipathy of Benedick and Beatrice into a perfect sympathy.

How is it, then, that the best scene of all, representing the Sicilian cathedral, so deeply impresses the spectator, and is suddenly found to be such a faithful aid to the imagination? Why do we discover new beauties in a dramatic position familiar to every Shakespearian student? Because, for the first time at any rate in our day, it has been approached with sympathy, and guided by a refined and artistic mind. One false step, one little error of taste, one pardonable moment of zeal in excess would have ruined the whole conception. It is the one solemn and serious moment in the play, and the danger is to treat it realistically and still with reverence. This cathedral scene seems to an imaginative play-goer the very triumph of artistic effect pushed to the nicest point of refinement and good taste. The art here is to impress and not to shock the spectator—to soothe the mind and not disturb it. It is needless to point out the dangers ready to the hand of any one arranging such a scene for the stage. A red lamp burning before the altar, a crucifix, the use of vestments by the officiating friar, any of the determined signs of a nuptial mass, an excess of genuflexions, would have shipwrecked the whole idea and seriously endangered the beautiful in art.

But what do we get instead? The symbols severed from the soul; the suggestion without the reality. There can be no harm in the incense that fills the air as the bridal processions file to the appointed spot; in the plaintive wail of the organ, with its soft and persuasive reed stop, contrasted with the secular music attendant on

the bride; there can be no danger in the admirable and effective contrast of the major and the minor keys throughout this extraordinary scenic composition; a contrast of priests and courtiers, of ecclesiastical ritual and courtly solemnity; of organ and stringed band; of religion and the world. And the consequence is that there is left impressed on the memory all that is beautiful and nothing that is distasteful. That is the highest mission of art. We recall old Leonato, with a look of tender love upon his face, guarding his daughter into the cathedral sanctuary; we see her crushed under the heel of a cruel suspicion, a "broken blossom, a ruined rhyme;" we hear the passionate cry of Claudio, "O, Hero! what a Hero hadst thou been," and, old play as it is, know full well how many Heros and Claudios are about us in the life of to-day. We are conscious of the sudden change from gay to grave, from lively to severe, as that one sudden, impulsive, and womanlike command, "Kill Claudio!" changes the purpose of the unreflective Benedick, and causes him to sacrifice friendship on the altar of love.

It will be found that Mr. Irving has succeeded in persuading us of three cardinal truths in connection with this most interesting play. First, that the complete unfolding of the characters of Beatrice and her lover is the mainstay of the whole plot; secondly, that between Beatrice and Benedick there is a close affinity, that each is the other's counterpart, that they are echoes of one another as much at the outset as when they are discovered at the close writing verses to one another in secret, that the antipathy which exists is partial, and is changed by the humour of their friends to a sympathy that is real; and lastly, most important fact of all, that in this merry and enchanting comedy, a "profound seriousness lies beneath all the superficial levity seen at first in the hero and heroine," or, as a clever critic has put it, "the very pair who have given the most decidedly comic character to the outset of the play are found on the point of giving it the most tragic turn towards its close." It is impossible to study Mr. Irving's acting as Benedick, or to sympathise fully with his masterly direction of the scene, without being persuaded that he has grasped these three most important truths.

Much has been said already of the admirable humour of the new Benedick, of his inimitable delivery of Shakespeare's witty phrases, bringing them home to the dullest intelligence by the slyness of his artistic method; of his soliloquies, that seem to us

masterpieces of comic expression, as full of thought, and intention, and earnestness as the thinking aloud of Hamlet himself. But there is much more than this in Mr. Irving's Benedick. There is expression—and the kind of expression may be seen by those who noticed that comical shrug of the shoulders and air of martyred resignation when the tamed Beatrice begins her old habit of chattering—but there is also seriousness. When the cathedral scene has filled the eyes of Beatrice with tears, and Benedick has been accepted as her protector, the whole man changes. There is a moment of revolt at the words "Kill Claudio!" He answers, "Ha! not for the wide world;" and Benedick means it. But he is over-persuaded, and love masters him. All the gentleman and soldier comes out in the now accepted lover. "Think you, in your soul, that Count Claudio hath wronged Hero?" asks this fine-spirited and noble-hearted gentleman. "Yea! as sure as I have a thought or a soul." That assertion from his mistress is enough for Benedick. "Enough; I am engaged. I will challenge him." And he never breaks his word; he assumes the quarrel in all honour and honesty. Mr. Irving's Benedick is not a mere mountebank railer against womankind, not a swaggering, self-sufficient egotist; but a soldier first, a lover next, and always a gentleman. This most comprehensive study will do far to remove many of the prejudices that have sprung from the actor's popularity, and in a measure explain that very popularity itself. Mr. Irving has never played a part without impressing the audience with his personal influence and his nature, and here these qualities are seen at their very best.

Merriment is the abiding quality of Miss Ellen Terry's Beatrice. She is Shakespeare's "pleasant-spirited lady;" she was born in a "merry hour;" we know that "a star danced, and under that was she born;" she has a "merry heart," and the actress leans charmingly on this view of the character. All the people about the court love Beatrice, as well they may. They know her antipathy to the rougher sex is only skin deep, and they trick her into matrimony. She is no virago or vixen, but a laughing, chaffing, madcap girl, whose laughter and high spirits are next door to tears. How true this is of life! Laughter and tears are only divided by the narrowest channel, and the art with which Miss Ellen Terry expresses this in the scene after the cruel

condemnation of her cousin is quite admirable. She wants to laugh with Benedick, but she must weep for Hero. Most daring and original of all is her reading of the well-known outburst: "O! God, that I were a man! I would eat his heart in the market-place." We hold it, novel as it is, to be perfectly correct and natural in such a woman. It is not the scornful rage of a vixen, or the scream of a vulgar shrew, but a sudden, passionate sob of suppressed emotion. "O! God, that I were a man! I would——" and then there is a long pause, as if the woman were too passionately indignant to give her thoughts utterance, but soon, with a wounded cry, and with rage expressed in the scarcely suppressed tears, come the words, "I would eat his heart in the market-place."

When we object to unconventional readings we must remember the kind of women presented to us. There are many Beatrices who could not speak those lines in that particular way. But such a Beatrice as Miss Ellen Terry must have spoken them so. All who understand and have studied the style of this gay and sportive actress will guess how she could say such words, in answer to Don Pedro, as "No, my lord, unless I might have another for working-days: your grace is too costly to wear every day," or her answer to the question if she were born in a merry hour, "No, sure, my lord, my mother cried." Such sentences as these are received with a veritable shout of applause. But the audience was scarcely prepared for so excellent a delivery of the rhymed and lyrical soliloquy, "What fire is in mine ears? Can this be true? Stand I condemned for pride and scorn so much;" and how true is the well-known Shakespearian simile as applied to this actress, "For look where Beatrice, like a lapwing, runs Close by the ground." This is exactly how Miss Ellen Terry always does run, on or off the stage.

At once both Mr. Irving and Miss Ellen Terry caught the spirit of the play; they filled it with gaiety and with humour, and every line of the text fell upon eager and appreciative ears. How often have we heard Shakespeare of late mouthed and mumbled over, distorted and twisted out of all shape! Here, then, was a sudden revelation. It was the very light breath and fragrance of true comedy. Beatrice was no shrew, but the most light-hearted, pleasant-spirited lady in the world. Benedick was no boor, but a refined, whimsical, humour-loving gentleman, whose every utter-

ance was taken up with a hearty laugh even to the uttermost parts of the distant gallery. Surely this is a subject for congratulation, when, through the skill of the artists, the comedy of Shakespeare can amuse—honestly amuse—and when the bantering scenes between Benedick and Beatrice are so gay and radiant that poor Dogberry and Verges, when they appeared upon the scene, were literally snuffed out. On ordinary occasions these comic characters come as a relief; this time they were felt to be a hindrance.

The point most admired as a rule, apart from the fantastic beauty of the scene, that put the whole attention in a period and so continually delighted the eye, was the thoroughly sound and excellent way that the comedy was being spoken. To elegance and taste was added expression, and it was Benedick himself who set the good example. So much has been said about Mr. Irving's manner and artistic method that it is only right and just to point to his Benedick as a model of good accent and expressive delivery. This quality was even more strongly felt later on, particularly in the soliloquies, which will be remembered as Mr. Irving's most successful efforts in comedy.

The first scene of the second act introduced another welcome surprise in the Don John of Mr. C. Glenny. Now, Don John is not considered a very telling or welcome part, but instantly this young actor made his mark, not by overdoing the villain, but by making him a plausible and possible man. The speech, "I had rather be a canker in a hedge," roused the attention of the audience, because it was understood by the actor and intelligently delivered; with the slightest effort and in the smallest possible space Don John made his mark. As the play proceeded the Beatrice rose gradually with the occasion. She had already shown she was Shakespeare's Beatrice, or something very like it, and there was no attempt to make acting points or to obtrude the virago. "No, uncle, I'll none: Adam's sons are my brethren, and truly I hold it a sin to match in my kindred." To hear Miss Terry speak that one sentence was enough to know that she understood the gay spirit of Beatrice. And it was a struggle in more senses than one for the mastery between the hero and heroine of the play. Mr. Irving and Miss Terry appeared to be vying with one another who should act the best; and though, in all probability, the prize will be awarded to the former, there was not much to choose between them until the test scene came after Hero's denunciation. Such sentences as

Benedick's "Why, that's spoken like an honest drover: so they sell bullocks," made the house laugh as uproariously as it is sometimes inclined to do over far less pregnant and witty matter; and even louder applause fell to Benedick's avowal, "I would not marry her though she were endowed with all that Adam had left him before he transgressed," charged with infinite cynicism by Mr. Irving, as well as to Miss Terry's arch answer to Don Pedro's bantering request, "Will you have me, lady?" "No, my lord, unless I might have another for working days." What wonder, then, that the second act went even better than the first, and was rewarded with another loud summons for all the performers.

In the third act, the scene in Leonato's garden was lovely in itself, both in arrangement and in colour, with its yellowing brown foliage, dim arcades of green, and old marble moss-eaten seat; but it was more remarkable still for Mr. Irving's soliloquy, in which the hesitating Benedick rails at love and lovers in general. The manner in which the actor gave a world of expression to such sentences as "But, till all graces be in one woman, one woman shall not come in my grace," and "Of good discourse, an excellent musician, and her hair shall be of what colour it please God," can only be understood by those who see and appreciate Mr. Irving's rich flow of sly humour. The audience had been presented with comedy at last, and sincerely appreciated it. The introduction of Balthazar with his song, "Sigh no more, ladies; sigh no more," was extremely welcome, for it introduced a young singer, Mr. J. Robertson, brother of two charming sisters well known in the musical world, who has not only a sweet and expressive voice, but well understood the grace and delicacy of this charming lyric. He did not come down to the footlights and deliver his song in a full-bodied way, as operatic tenors are wont to do, but he acted Balthazar and belonged to the scene. Of course the song was encored, for taste was in every note and line.

There is one scene of comedy in this play as good, surely, as can be desired. We allude to the trick played upon Benedick by Leonato, Don Pedro, and Claudio. It is worthy the closest and most minute study, and is sustained throughout in the gayest and most laughter-loving spirit. Would, indeed, that the correlative scene between Beatrice and the girl could have been played so well. The manly, hearty, outspoken style of Mr. W. Terriss is

of the greatest value to the play, and gives to Don Pedro an importance that cannot be overvalued. Mr. Terriss is popular with a Lyceum audience, because they can hear him, and they like his spirit. The play moves—any play must move—when life and energy are given to it. This is of more serious consequence with Don Pedro, because he has to tell the story of the play. Once miss that, and down goes the comedy several tones. If young actors would only follow the advice of Mr. Terriss, and put their heart in their work, they would be more appreciated. The radical fault of modern acting is dropping the voice at the end of every sentence. The audience cannot hear, and consequently they yawn. To the Don Pedro of Mr. Terriss, Mr. Forbes Robertson as Claudio makes an admirable contrast. The young man is in love, but he is never affected, he can be gay and bright in his comedy, and in pathos he feels the scene and the position. In the cathedral scene, the passionate, nervous acting of the Claudio was just the note that was wanted in this very beautiful harmony of ideas. There is heart in Mr. Forbes Robertson's acting. Mention has already been made of Mr. Glenny's Don John, a nicely-conceived and artistic little bit, and what better or more picturesque Antonio could be found than Mr. H. Howe? But in my humble opinion it is not necessary to confirm the good impressions formed of the Leonato of Mr. Fernandez, as fine and firm, as varied and picturesque a performance as any Shakespearian enthusiast could desire. He is light and full of humour in the comedy scenes, and when called upon for pathos is as firm as a rock, giving eloquence to the poetry and passion to the scene. The Leonato is as impressive as any figure in the play, and as acted by Mr. Fernandez, he is one of the strong pivots on which the structure rests.

Dogberry and his companions fail to attract any interest whatever, but it is not the fault of Shakespeare. As usual, the public is inclined to visit the poet with the sins of the performers. A Dogberry with more pronounced humour; a Hero who should add idealism to her prettiness and more poetry to her promise; and a less modern Ursula in voice and style, would remove the only blots on a performance of singular interest and magnificent moment.

One word more about Dogberry. "I don't think very much of Shakespeare's humour," is the contemptuous opinion of the crowd when a Dogberry has no sententiousness and laughs at his own jokes. And yet we have an actor who I suppose would make

the most ideal Dogberry the stage has ever seen. I allude to Mr. Harry Paulton. He is, so far as his humour is concerned, Dogberry himself. He has just the face, just the voice, just the manner for Dogberry. If Mr. Paulton played the part, it is not likely that we should hear that Shakespeare had no humour, or that his jokes were out of colour.

[I make no apology for republishing this essay—first, because I have some faith in early impressions, notwithstanding what is said to the contrary, and secondly, because it is convenient occasionally to preserve from utter destruction the newspaper criticisms that have caused much labour and thought.]

"RIP VAN WINKLE."

A New and Original Comic Opera, in Three Acts, written by MM. HENRI MEILHAC and PHILIPPE GILLE and Mr. H. B. FARNIE, and composed by M. ROBERT PLANQUETTE. Produced at the Comedy Theatre, Saturday, October 14th, 1882.

Rip Van Winkle ... MR. FRED LESLIE.	Gretchen ... ... MISS VIOLET CAMERON.
Derrick Van Slous MR. W. S. PENLEY.	Sara ... ... MISS CLARA GRAHAM.
Peter Van Dunk ... MR. LOUIS KELLEHER	Jacintha ... ... MISS CONSTANCE LEWIS.
Diebrich Knicker-	Katrina ... ... MISS SADIE MARTINOT.
bocker ... ... MR. E. WILMORE.	Little Hardcase MISS MADGE MILTON.
Capt. Hugh Rowley MR. FRED DARRELL.	Hans ... ... MISS EFFIE MASON.
Nick Vedder ... ... MR. LIONEL BROUGH.	Alice ... . MISS ALICE VICAT.
Tom Tit ... ... MISS ROSIE MONCRIEFF.	

THE representation in England of a new comic opera by a foreign composer, prior to the production of the opera in any other country, is indeed a rarity, and no wonder that the Comedy Theatre was crowded from floor to ceiling on the first night of M. Planquette's "Rip Van Winkle." Every reader knows Washington Irving's story as it appeared in his delightful "Sketch-Book" in 1819. There have been many versions of it as a play, the most famous being those produced by J. H. Hackett, in America, one of which was by a Mr. Kerr and the other by Bayle Bernard. Then came the version by Charles Burke, which was brought out in 1849 at the Arch Street Theatre, Philadelphia, Burke playing Rip, and Joseph Jefferson acting the innkeeper. This adaptation was afterwards used for a long time by Jefferson, but was at last re-written and re-constructed by Dion Boucicault, and produced by Jefferson at the London Adelphi Theatre, on September 4th, 1865. We all know the triumphant success achieved by Jefferson as Rip—a success which Mr. William Winter graphically describes as having "ripened into unquestionable, unassailable, auspicious, and beneficent permanence." In the present version, as given at the Comedy, written by MM. Henri Meilhac and Philippe Gille and

Mr. H. B. Farnie, though the main outline of the story has been retained, certain changes have been made, and it may be as well to show the arrangement of the piece in its operatic form. In the opening act we find Rip's wife, Gretchen, anxiously awaiting her husband's return from his unknown trip. When the light-hearted fellow arrives, he is joyously welcomed by Gretchen, but the evil designs of the lawyer, Derrick, are at work, and through this scamp's agency Rip is accused of having offended against the government, and is driven off to the mountains. So ends the first act. Rip is followed by his wife and the village people, but they soon tire of wandering about the dreary place, and Rip is left alone. Then he is surrounded by the goblin crew of Hendrick Hudson, and the drink which sends him off into his sleep of twenty years is given him by a fay—

> Fairer than famed of old, or fabled since,
> Of fairy damsels met in forest wide
> By knights of Logres, and of Lionés,
> Lancelot, or Pellas, or Pellenore.

When Rip awakens—in the third act—the village has increased to an important town, and all things are changed. Gretchen is dead, but in her place is the daughter, Alice, now grown to womanhood. Rip is amazed, and the pathetic recognition between father and daughter is effected through Rip singing an old song which he had taught his baby-child, and which serves to prove his identity and bring the piece to a happy conclusion. The opera is one of the best that I have seen for a long time, and the authors are to be congratulated on the construction of the piece, and on their capital and inoffensive libretto. M. Planquette's music is full of charm and melody, and the opera is interpreted by an able company. The title-rôle is sustained by Mr. Fred Leslie, who has made a hit in the part, and who acts dramatically and sings with capital effect. Miss Violet Cameron, of course, plays Gretchen and Alice, and again wins her audience and captivates her hearers by her exquisite rendering of several pretty songs, the most noticeable of which is a letter-song in the last act. This is given by Alice on the receipt of a letter from her lover, and Miss Cameron's sympathetic delivery of it will live in my memory for many a day. For fun and laughter the opera is chiefly indebted to Mr. Lionel Brough, whose rich fund of merriment keeps the audience in a continuous ripple of enjoyment whenever he is on the stage. Miss Sadie Martinot plays with a

sly appreciation of the fun, and Miss Effie Mason, a juvenile actress, sings capitally. Miss Ada Wilson gives a pleasing dance in the second act, and the dresses and scenery—the latter by Mr. Beverley—are as pretty as could be wished.

"THE MERRY WAR."

A New Comic Opera, in Three Acts, written by F. BELL and RICHARD GENEE, English version by R. REECE, and composed by JOHANN STRAUSS.

Produced at the Alhambra Theatre, Monday, October 16th, 1882.

The Marquis di Malespina	M. ALBERT LEFEVRE.
Umberto Spinola ...	MR. HENRY WALSHAM
Franchetti	MR. A. COLLINI.
Biffi	MR. J. NEVILLE.
Spinzi	MR. E. THOMPSON.
Riccardo	MR. C. POWER.
Gini	MR. FRASER.
Colonel van Schielen	MR. A. E. SINCLAIR.
An Orderly	MR. RISSON.
Sentinel	MR. CATTELL.
Balthazar...	MR. ALLEN THOMAS.
Artesimia...	MADAME AMADI.
Violetta	MISS CONST. LOSEBY.
Elsie	MDLLE. LORY STUBEL
Theresa	MISS JESSIE MAYLAND

THIS last production at the Alhambra is not nearly so good as its predecessor, "Babil and Bijou." Anyhow on the first night I found it exceedingly dull and tedious. But it may have brightened up since then, in which case it may run until something better can be got ready. So far as I can make out, the so-called "merry" war consists in a harmless battle, which is fought over a dispute concerning a dancer. Both sides are not in favour of fighting, and the contest is carried on in a very satisfactory manner, no blood being spilt, and nothing being broken but hard words. In the attempt to pass the enemy's ranks, the countess is captured, but her captor falls in love with her, and so, after various complications, she is set free, and, as is customary, "all ends happily." There is no denying the fact that the piece is anything but "merrie, joyouse, brighte, and sparklinge," and had it not been for the singing of Miss Constance Loseby and the acting of Madame Amadi it would have been very slow indeed. Mr. Henry Walsham sung in his usual style, and efficiently supported Miss Loseby, but neither M. Albert Lefevre or Mdlle. Lory Stubel can be accepted as very welcome additions to our stage, and the humour of Mr. Allen Thomas is not, to me at least, very apparent. A ballet by Mons. A. Bertrand, with music by Mons. G. Jacobi, introduced into the last act, is remarkable for its beauty and colour; and the dancing of Mdlle. de Labruyère and Mdlle. Maria Valain, together with the graceful movements of Miss Lizzie Percival and Mdlle. Lamori, goes far to remove the depression which is caused by sitting through the performance of such a production as "The Merry (!) War."

THE THEATRE. Nº 32, THIRD SERIES.

"The happiest moment of my life dates from now!"

Adrla Mrason

Act II. "Odette."

IN PERMANENT PHOTOGRAPHY BY THE LONDON STEREOSCOPIC COMPANY, 54, CHEAPSIDE.

Our Omnibus-Box.

MR. HARRY QUILTER, in the "Spectator," has given us his views on Mr. Henry Irving's Benedick. All credit to him for stating what he conscientiously believes to be true; but the recorded criticism will not, one would think, enhance Mr. Harry Quilter's value as a guide to the acting of Shakespeare. Mr. Quilter does not mince matters. He says: "It has all the elements of "weakness, which we so rarely see in his work. It is feeble "and inconsecutive in its rendering of the character; it produces "*no vivid impression of any kind* (that is a bold phrase, "Mr. Quilter); it gives us no new ideas as to what Shakespeare "meant, or what the interpreter means, and what fun it possesses "is obtained in a cheap fetch-the-gallery sort of manner, which "we should have thought would scarcely have found favour at "the Lyceum." All this is strong and outspoken enough, but worse remains behind.

Says Mr. Quilter: "The receipt for the 'popular mystery known "to the world as a heavy dragoon' comes irresistibly to one's "mind on seeing this Benedick; and he seems, like Colman's "hero, to be 'two single gentlemen rolled into one.' The "humour of the character degenerates into something which is "almost farce, and it seems at times as if we were looking at an "overgrown school-boy playing at being a woman-hater. And "the impersonation grows less endurable still when the change "takes place, and though it may tickle the 'eyes' of the "groundlings to see Mr. Irving stand in the front of the stage, "making faces to express his perplexity, we saw in it nothing "that was admirable. Indeed, the impression given is, first, "that the misanthropy was a joke; secondly, that the love was an "even greater joke; an interpretation which has the effect of "leaving the spectator in a complete fog as to what the actor "means, or whether he means anything at all."

All this takes one's breath away. Modesty one would have thought would have induced Mr. Quilter to qualify his astounding statements by an interjectional "it seems to me," or "as I

understood it," or "apparently," or something of that sort. Even the famous author of "chicken and champagne" did that. He never wrote an article without peppering it with qualifications. He never asserted anything without adding "at least that is our view," a trick so constantly used that occasionally it looked like the protecting shield of an astounded and good-natured editor. But Mr. Quilter has no such scruples. He answers for himself and the whole world. He says boldly that no one knows what Mr. Irving means at all. I thought when I came out of the theatre that I did. But I suppose I am wrong. Mr. Quilter evidently knows best. I observe, however, that Mr. Harry Quilter does not tell us how Benedick ought to be played. He gives us no idea or view on the subject one way or another. Surely we are entitled to that at least from him. Mr. Quilter's criticism would surely carry more weight if he told us how and when Mr. Irving so conspicuously failed. Perhaps he will do so by-and-by when his nerves have recovered the shock that they received from the "jigging" of Benedick and Beatrice. "Neither Benedick nor "Beatrice seemed able to keep still for a moment, and at times "this resolved itself into a kind of jig about the stage very trying "to the nerves of the audience." Well, I have witnessed the play twice, and I never saw two audiences less nervous in my life.

Mr. Quilter, I daresay, has studied the theatre, but he is inaccurate about Mr. Irving's former career. He says: "His fame was first made to discerning eyes in the part of Digby Grant in 'The Two Roses.'" I don't know if Charles Dickens had "discerning eyes," but he discovered the young actor to fame in "The Lancashire Lass" some time before Digby Grant was born or thought of. Others discerned it in Rawdon Scudamore ("Hunted Down"), in Mr. Chevenix ("Uncle Dick's Darling"), in Robert Macaire and countless other characters which pass out of the memory of modern critics even if ever they arrived there.

I sincerely regret to hear of the untimely death of a young and charming writer, whose early work for the stage gave such signs of healthy promise. I allude to Mr. George Douglas, author of "Stage Land" and other clever works, and who from time to time assisted me in the lighter duties connected with this magazine. He possessed a delightful fancy and pure style,

and he is happily relieved of the cares connected with a hard life and a harassing profession.

Mr. W. Davenport Adams sums up the disputed question of the value to the stage and public of a School of Dramatic Art, and he is not afraid to tell the profession a few home truths. He says "a promising young pupil will no doubt in many cases be "preferred to a respectable, but not too polished, 'old stager.' "And to this we cannot of course expect the profession to be readily "reconciled. At the same time, if professionals will throw aside "their personal feeling, they will be forced to admit that nothing "could be better for the profession as a body than that it should "be recruited from the educated classes, and that its votaries should "have had a special instruction in the art. The tone and position "of the profession will be raised when it consists largely, if not "exclusively, of persons who have been trained by accomplished "teachers in the art they practise.

"And if the establishment of the School of Dramatic Art is "certain to be of advantage to the profession itself, it is equally "certain to be of advantage to the public. Those who oppose "it are loud in praises of the past and present system, by which "young actors have learned the rudiments of their art in small "parts in provincial theatres, and have perfected themselves in "it by dint of constant and unremitting labour. And, no doubt, "experience is essential to success in the histrionic profession. "However well a man may be taught, he must have opportunities "of testing his knowledge, or he will never advance in it. The "true artist is constantly improving in his method. The longer "he plays, the more consummate he becomes—if he be really an "artist.

"Such players as Mr. Irving and Mrs. Kendal have not, we "may be sure, done learning yet. But why should the earlier "studies of an actor all be prosecuted to the disadvantage "of the public? Why should the public be a sort of corpus vile "for the novice to make his experiments upon? It is all very well "for old actors to praise the process by which they have themselves "risen gradually into notice, but the process has nevertheless been "unpleasant for their audiences. And we are not sure that it has

"been altogether favourable to the actors themselves. Practice "is well in theory, but surely practice in bad methods is "deplorable.

"And how is a young actor to acquire a good style, simply "by dint of plodding on in his own way? He may see the good, "and deliberately prefer the bad. Many an actor would be less "incurably mannered than he is if his awkwardness had been "checked at the outset of his career. And that is where the "School of Dramatic Art should be useful. No one says that it "will turn out clever artists in every instance: all the pupils "of the Royal Academy of Music do not get gold medals and "diplomas.

"But this, at least, a Dramatic School will ensure: it can ensure "that its certificated pupils have, before they join the profession, "at least mastered the grammar of their art—that they can speak "blank verse, move gracefully, gesticulate with propriety, and "generally comport themselves like educated persons. Young men "have to be trained for the law, for medicine, for the Church, and "for the services: it is simple nonsense to say that they ought not "to be equally trained for the stage."

There are many words of wisdom in Mr. Dutton Cook's able and incisive remarks concerning the Benedick and Beatrice at the Lyceum. Such criticism as this ought to be preserved, but how much valuable criticism nowadays goes into the waste-paper basket. "Benedick's soliloquy in the third act is very happily delivered, "while in the later dialogues with Beatrice, and the scene of his "challenging of Claudio, the actor's success is supreme. Mr. "Irving's Benedick is a valorous cavalier, who rejoices in brave "apparel and owns a strong feeling for humour; over his witty "encounters with Beatrice there presides a spirit of pleasantness; "his rudest sallies are so mirthfully spoken as to be deprived "of all real offensiveness; he banters like a gentleman, and not like "a churl; he is a privileged railer at women, a recognised jester "at marriage, but a popular person nevertheless. The stage "Benedick has been apt to be something of a bully, as the stage "Beatrice has been often very much of a scold. At the Lyceum "it is clearly shown that the very combativeness of Benedick and

"Beatrice is an evidence of their mutual regard. They delight "in controversy, because, unconsciously, it involves companionship. "Their war of words is always 'a merry war.' The aversion with "which their love commences is purely artificial; the more they "traffic in satire and epigram, the closer they are brought together; "their passion for ridicule is a sort of common ground upon which "they meet, and in the sequel are unwilling to part."

Now that everyone is talking of Schools of Dramatic Art and the practical teaching of acting, attention may well be drawn to a very beautiful book written and compiled by an eminent authority. It is called "The Actor's Art," by the celebrated Gustave Garcia, professor of singing and declamation at the Royal Academy of Music, and professor of singing at the Guildhall School of Music. This handsome and most useful work is a practical and scientific treatise on stage declamation, public speaking, and deportment, and is specially designed for the use of artists, students, and amateurs. The book is richly studded with illustrations by A. Forestier, and I should think it would be accepted as a text-work on the subjects of which it treats so exhaustively. The publishers are Messrs. Pettitt & Co., of Frith Street, Soho; the price, considering the style of the work, is exceedingly cheap; and it is naturally dedicated to Henry Irving, the head of the dramatic profession.

As announced, the School of Dramatic Art was opened on Wednesday, October 4th, at 7, Argyll Street, Regent Street. Up to the 17th ult., forty-five pupils had paid their fees and were receiving instruction in elocution from Mrs. Chippendale and Miss Carlotta Leclercq; in stage gesture and deportment from Mr. Paul Martinetti; in dancing from Madame Bizet-Michau; and in fencing from M. Angelo. The theatre is being completed under the direction of Mr. Bignay, and as soon as it is ready for occupation will be utilised for lectures, and, after Christmas, for rehearsals and performances. Everyone must congratulate the leading spirits of the undertaking on this first serious and practical step towards the perfecting of a once visionary scheme. The new pupils are not only well, but I am confidently informed they are all extremely happy.

I really do not think that very much more need be said about

Mrs. Langtry or her performance of Rosalind. That much-discussed lady has sailed for America to take up a lengthy engagement, and I am sure that I, as I have done from the outset, wish her well in this and any future enterprise. She has all the qualities of which good actresses are made, she is industrious, and she is ambitious. The improvement she has shown since she first appeared as Miss Hardcastle at the Haymarket is little less than marvellous, and I hope that she will not be persuaded in America to forget the good lessons that have been taught her.

But it is just possible surely to recognise Mrs. Langtry's ability and promise, and to speak favourably both of her Miss Hardcastle and her Hester Grazebrook, without being bound to overlook the conspicuous faults of her Rosalind. That performance did not delight me at all, not because it was deficient in cleverness and tact, but because it was a performance so thoroughly commonplace and unimaginative. Rosalind must be something more than a beautiful woman to look at; she must have a beautiful nature to look into. I was, I own, surprised to find so refined and charming an actress treating Rosalind from such a common and vulgar standpoint. I find, however, that writers exist who do really believe Rosalind to have been a vulgar woman, and more than that, actually have the courage to state that Shakespeare had "a low opinion of women." After that the Deluge. This "every day young man's" view of Rosalind is really so amusing that I am inclined to quote it.

"I have seen it stated that Rosalind is the most refined and "idealised of Shakespeare's women. Possibly she is, but all "Shakespeare's women are of the earth, earthy. The age in "which he lived was a coarse one. He judged women by those "with whom he came in contact, and seems to have had a some-"what low opinion of them. Rosalind is one of the most pleasing "of his heroines. She falls in love with Orlando, because she "sees him vanquish a muscular wrestler, tells him so, and then "she goes forth in a wood dressed as a boy. Finding Orlando "carving her name upon trees, she amuses herself by mystifying "him. All this is very well for a stage pastoral, but to talk of "Mrs. Langtry's Rosalind being bad, because she 'takes a "superficial view' of the character, does not sufficiently develop

"its 'tender and imaginative part,' has not studied it 'in the "highest sense,' and 'treats the life in the Forest of Arden as "if it were a huge practical joke,' is very much the same mawkish "trash as an æsthete would deliver himself of respecting a lily."

Now I disagree with this writer toto cælo. Indeed, to agree with him seems to me a profanation of Shakespeare. It was because Mrs. Langtry believed, or had been taught to believe, that Rosalind was a vulgar romp and no more, that I stated my objection to it. It was just because Mrs. Langtry spoke that line, "Alas the day, what shall I do with my doublet and hose?" as her appreciative critic correctly puts it, as if she were merely to say, "Don't you look at my legs, you naughty man!" that I conceived she knew nothing about the Rosalind who has appealed to intellectual audiences of all time.

Yet why should not one disagree with a clever lady purely on a question of interpretation and of art, without incurring a whole whirlwind of animadversion and abuse? Why should a man, whose ideas of Shakespeare's women are not associated with the vulgar wit and scurrilous chaff of the "apprentices and yeomen of Queen Elizabeth's day," be instantly dubbed as a "blasé, atrabilious, clique, and camaraderie ridden London critic," or be told that he "maligns a lady"? Why should a student of the stage, who does not conscientiously agree with Mrs. Langtry's view of Rosalind, be courteously told that he is "as intellectually fitted to form a just estimate even of the humblest theatrical performance in a barn as he is to rule an empire"? It seems to me that there is a good deal of barn-storming in this unwholesome support, and that it is beside the question of criticism when to disagree with Mrs. Langtry, or, for the matter of that, any artist, is to be "an emasculated, lackadaisical, posturing æsthete"!

I think I was one of the very first who protested against the ungenerous, unkindly, and unwarrantable attempt to hound Mrs. Langtry off the stage, when she first appeared on it, in order to assert vi et armis the "professional determination to crush her if possible." The very few who did this have had to eat a considerable amount of very dirty humble-pie, and have thoroughly earned the contempt they deserve. It is only necessary to paste their opinions together to show what they are worth.

This is not a social question, but one of art, and art alone. Mrs. Langtry has as much right to go on the stage as anyone else, no matter from what class they spring. To talk of her "taking the bread out of the mouth of the poor professional" is, to my mind, the most contemptible compliment that can be paid to the profession. The professional who is worth his salt will not allow the bread to be taken out of his mouth by Mrs. Langtry, or anyone else. False guides are the men who argue in this fashion, and I do not envy the unfortunate position of anyone who first compares Mrs. Langtry to the Tichborne Claimant and the Greek "tattooed nobleman," and tells her politely to go about her business, and then has to turn round and say that after all she may make an actress. I am perfectly certain that Mrs. Langtry not only promises to be, but is, a useful, painstaking, clever actress as young actresses go; but her Rosalind disappointed me, not from its crudity, but from the conception of the character, which I hold to be radically wrong.

I have only had time just to peep into and skim over what appears to me a very remarkable book. It is called "English Dramatists of To-day," by Mr. William Archer (Sampson, Low, and Co.). It is not necessary thoroughly to agree with every opinion expressed by a writer in order to praise his work, but here we surely have a strong judicial and critical power exercised with graveness, impartiality, and perfect good taste. Mr. Archer, unlike so many contemporary writers, knows his subject thoroughly. It is at his fingers' ends. He has acquired his knowledge equally from the study and the stage, and some of his judgments are delivered with a neatness and epigrammatic force that are beyond praise. Mr. Archer appears to have a hearty contempt for newspaper criticism; but this is a common failing of all critics who do not write for the newspapers. I have never known one of them who had a good word to throw at these despised dogs, and yet I am confident—as confident as I am of anything—that the drama gradually crept to its place amongst the fine arts when dramatic reporting ceased and dramatic criticism began.

I would ask Mr. Archer, or any other fair and intelligent authority, to compare the newspaper theatrical reports of twenty years ago with the theatrical reports—if he cares to call them

so—of to-day. Having done that, can he conscientiously assert that newspaper criticisms have a commercial value and no more? If the public had not been aroused to a love of and a study of the modern drama and modern dramatists, Mr. William Archer's book would never have been written at all. And that would have been a loss to contemporary criticism. Mr. Archer, like so many more, forgets what persistent, dogged, independent criticism has been doing for the stage these twenty years past, and when the stage has been propped up by criticism and can stand alone, he kicks away the supports contemptuously. At any rate Mr. Archer's book is the work of an educated, fair-minded man, and not the concentrated essence of the spite and bad taste of a literary prig. And I say, thank God for that! It is bad enough to hear the drama abused by the old, but to find it patronised by the young! Ye gods, that way madness lies.

"Hood's Comic Annual." is before me, the same old cover, the same familiar type, all the same save the date, 1883. What memories that book recalls, chiefly of its first editor and proprietor, the liveliest sweetest nature, the most impulsive of creatures, the best of friends. Owing, as I do, all the little success I have had in life to his manly encouragement and sympathy, it would not be like me, nor would it have been like him, not to have recalled the past in looking at the book, or to have failed to think once more of the old friend we laid to rest in Nunhead Cemetery in the days when we were young.

I am sure my dead and gone old friend would have appreciated as I do the young talent surging and swelling up around us. He loved to encourage it in "Hood's Annual," and it is encouraged there just as he would have ordered it. Young story-tellers and essayists with their prose, young poets with their verse, all had a place in "Hood's Annual." They have it now, and they deserve it. Of the old band two faithful ones remain—Godfrey Turner and Harry Leigh. Why is it that my old friend Godfrey Turner's paper, "A Singular Theft," reminds me now of Tom Robertson and now of Jeff Prowse? I suppose because they were all brought up in the same school, and a good school it was, in which heart and nature prevailed over pedantry and priggishness. I wish we

saw more of it now, more genuine consideration for one another than is now found in our age of back-biters and Snarleyyows. We were like brothers in those old days when Tom Hood was at the head of us, and we didn't shin one another under the table.

The "Masher," that poor debilitated sickly creature of 1882, whose deeds are chronicled as if he were a knight-errant; whose presence and patronage lower the tone of theatrical amusements; who cannot swallow an oyster unless it is smothered with cayenne-pepper, and whose parched mouth hisses for champagne, is a puzzle to the peripatetic philosopher. But after all, he is only the "Champagne Charlie" of 1867 with a difference. Champagne Charlie had some fun in him. He went about his dissipation with recklessness and a light heart. He was an "amusing cuss." But the "Masher," if he be typically and properly presented at the play, is a dull dog, without an ounce of humour in his fuddled brain, and whose contact must be an insult to the women whose characters he so unfeelingly compromises.

In 1867 there was a parody of one of Swinburne's poems published that will explain the difference between Champagne Charlies of yesterday and Mashers of to-day. This is how it ran:—

OUR CHARLIE CHAMPAGNE.

(AFTER A MODERN POET.)

RED whiskers that typify swelldom,
Rough hair that resembles a mat,
The heavy dull eyes and the seldom
Clean shirt, and the villanous hat;
When these have all lost their attraction,
What shall rest of thee, then? what remain,
Oh, king, of a dubious faction,
Our Charlie Champagne!

Nine lives are not given to mortals,
But alone to conventional cats—
What is one worth by publican's portals,
And vicissitudinous vats?

Fast midnights and head-aching morrows,
And the love of a lamp-breaking lark,
Change to yawns at the desk and to sorrows
That wear out the clerk.

O garments of colours that frighten—
O trousers made straight to the knees—
Short coats, slimmest figures that tighten,
And neckties as green as the trees.
O hands free of gloves and of water,
That dangle a limited cane.
O beau of the publican's daughter,
Our Charlie Champagne!

Who taught thee thy slang then,—now mellow
With rank repetition and age?
Were you innocent ever, young fellow?
You must have been once, I'll engage.
Did you ever like cricket and rowing?
Were you ever a boy and at school?
Why after your learning and growing
Go playing the fool?

Were you sick of the tug and the tussle,
Of your life that you changed in a year,
From the mirth and the manhood of muscle,
To the froth and the folly of beer?
Relinquish your cutaway clothing,
There's a turn to the lengthiest lane,
Come back, and relieve us from loathing,
O Charlie Champagne!

The great event of our on-coming November month will be the opening of the Globe Theatre, under the management of Mrs. Bernard Beere, and the production of the Laureate's new pastoral play, "The Promise of May." Mrs. Bernard Beere, by her energy, industry, persistence, and consistent good taste, has won to her cause those "troops of friends" who do so much to encourage and maintain a determined enterprise. She starts forward with the hearty good wishes of the thoughtful play-goer. The new play is said to be a charming one, the subject bold, the treatment nervous

and dramatic. Mrs. Bernard Beere will, of course, be the heroine—the elder of two affectionate sisters. Miss Emmeline Ormsby will be the other sister—the gentle, meek, loving Hetty, to the calm, strong-hearted Dinah, for there seems to be a ring of Adam Bede in the play. The arch deceiver, the black shadow of the story, is Mr. Hermann Vezin, who has a fine character of a freethinker. Over this tragedy of life watches Mr. Charles Kelly, one of those strong yet tender men, one of those manly affectionate lovers, in whose portrayal this actor has no rival on the stage.

> He was a prince—a brave God-fearing knight,
> The very pink and bloom of chivalry,
> Proud as a war horse—fair as the dawn of day,
> Staunch as a woman—tender as a man.

I always think of those lines when Mr. Kelly takes a Gabriel Oak sort of character—a strong protector of true women.

The following is the cast of "The Promise of May:"

Farmer Dobson ... MR. CHARLES KELLY.	Dora Steer ... ... MRS. BERNARD-BEERE
Edgar ... ... MR. HERMANN VEZIN.	Eva Steer (her sister) MISS E. ORMSBY.
Farmer Steer (Dora's father) ... ... MR. H. CAMERON.	Farm Servants { MISS LEIGHTON. MISS MAGGIE HUNT.
Farm Labourers { MR. RUSSELL MR. MEDWIN. MR. HALLEY.	

The scene is laid in Lincolnshire, the scenery being painted by Messrs. Hann and Perkins. Mr. John D'Auban has arranged a rustic dance, and Mr. Hamilton Clarke has composed a hay-makers' chorus.

Prominent amongst our promising actresses is Miss Helen Mathews, who, it will be remembered, played with such taste and success in "The Two Roses" when recently revived at the Lyceum. This clever lady has had further opportunities of showing her nice sense of comedy in the character of Vera in "Moths" during the indisposition of Miss Marie Litton. The country critics were warm in their praise of her well-considered and very graceful performance. Since then Miss Mathews has appeared as Celia in "As You Like It," and shown how well she understands the poetry of the enchanting comedy. A good Celia, like a good Hero in "Much Ado About Nothing," is essential to the enjoyment of these imaginative plays.

The London Stereoscopic Company have, I understand, supplied

to Messrs. Pears, for circulation in the United States, two hundred thousand portraits of Madame Adelina Patti and Mrs. Langtry, said to be the largest order of the kind ever given.

"I held it truth with him who sings
To one clear harp in divers tones,
That men may rise on stepping-stones
Of their dead selves to higher things."

Thus runs the first verse of the "In Memoriam" of Alfred Tennyson, and upon it is founded the new drama, written by Messrs. Henry A. Jones and Henry Herman, for Mr. Wilson Barrett. "The Silver King" is the title of the play. Delicate indeed must be the touch that will be able to accommodate the exigencies of a modern Princess's drama to Tennyson's airy lines. The new play is termed by the authors "a play with a purpose," the "purpose" being the one conveyed in the Laureate's poetry. Mr. Barrett has an exceedingly fine part in the new piece, so has also Miss Eastlake, and all the members of the Princess's Company have been fitted with the exception of Miss Ormsby, who goes to the Globe. Mr. Stafford Hall and Mr. Bruce Smith have painted some very fine realistic scenery both of town and country, whilst the landscapes have been entrusted to the brush of Mr. Walter Hann. The play, which although full of stirring dramatic events will not be sensational, will be produced at the end of the run of "The Romany Rye," but whether before or after Christmas next is undecided. It is in active rehearsal at present. Good luck then to Wilson Barrett in his new venture, say I, a manager who has done so much, and so continuously, for the well-being of the modern stage.

Miss Calhoun, a young actress who recently appeared at the Imperial Theatre, playing Hester Grazebrook, in "An Unequal Match," on October 14th, and Rosalind on the following Saturday, is a worthy aspirant for theatrical honours. She has every qualification for the stage, and she should succeed. She is not only young and pretty, but she possesses a charming voice, and she is evidently highly intelligent. Her Hester Grazebrook was a capital performance, full of excellent ideas, and containing a variety of

expression that was quite admirable. Many little touches that she gave to the part were new and effective, and her acting throughout displayed ability and much thoughtfulness. In the earlier portion of the comedy she was seen at her best, but her acting in the last act was by no means unsatisfying.

Miss Calhoun's Rosalind, though a little unequal and rather dull at first—faults which may easily be attributed to the nervousness naturally attendant upon the first performance of so important a character—became brighter as the play progressed, and some of the lady's acting in the Forest of Arden scenes was especially commendable. Miss Calhoun introduced into "As You Like It" the "Cuckoo" song from "Love's Labour Lost," and was encored for her pleasing singing. The introduction of the song, if not inappropriate, can scarcely be held up for commendation. Altogether, Miss Calhoun has made a hit, and is to be congratulated upon her success.

"Songs in Sunshine" is the title of a pretty little book recently published by Messrs. Eyre and Spottiswoode. It is principally a collection of lyrics which have originally appeared in various papers and magazines. It has been compiled by the Rev. Frederick Langbridge, and will be found interesting alike to old heads and young hearts.

The new comedy by Mr. Pinero, in rehearsal at Toole's Theatre, says "Atlas," in "The World," is to be called "Girls and Boys," and is rural in character. Mr. Toole will leave the ranks of retired shopkeepers, and is fitted with a part worthy of his talents in Solomon Prothero, a village schoolmaster, who also performs the functions of cobbler. "Girls and Boys" is by no means a one-part piece, all the leading characters being equally strong. The company will be strengthened by the acquisition of Miss Myra Holme, who plays Gillian West, and Miss Eley Kempster, a young actress of great promise, who makes her first appearance in London as Jenny Kibble.

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The Theatre.

DECEMBER, 1882.

A PERSONAL CHAPTER.

It would not be just to the Editor of this Magazine, or considerate to the readers of it who have so generously and cordially extended to him their valuable sympathy, to pass over in silence the termination of an unhappy litigation that has been before the public for more than a year and a half. "The Theatre" magazine, its fame, its fortunes, and its history, were discussed at such length, and with such strong feeling, in the Court of Queen's Bench just a year ago, that I feel it only right to add a few words before a bitter controversy is buried and forgotten for ever.

When in the month of June, 1881, I woke up one morning and found myself—to alter an old saying—"infamous," there was only one of two things to be done: to suffer misrepresentation in silence, or to crush calumny at any cost. Had I adopted the first alternative, I should have immediately inherited a legacy of discomfort, and given a direct encouragement to malevolent gossip. Silence would have prejudiced me in the eyes of the general public, and, I think, rendered me unfit for the post of conducting this magazine. Silence would have encouraged the whispers of those very charitable friends who, when they hear evil spoken of any man, are so ready to insist that "there is no smoke without fire." There are many who, in such a case, conscientiously believe in the policy of silence, not anticipating its evil consequences. The Secretary of State for War, on alluding the other day in the House of Commons to some silly gossip current about Sir Garnet Wolseley, said: "The extract refers to something "which has been stated as common gossip. I believe common "gossip generally lies, and I therefore do not for a moment

"credit such statements." But a public writer and a critic cannot lightly dismiss or ignore such serious and fatal charges. So, acting thoroughly in accordance with my own conviction, and on the best possible advice, I did what I did, and encountered the full peril of the modern administration of the libel law in its most exaggerated form, which consists, as a writer has recently observed with some epigrammatic truth, in "cleaning characters with blacking-brushes."

For my own part I never doubted for an instant that any writer, having ascertained that he had been misinformed on a question of fact, would immediately have rectified the error, and tendered an apology which no gentleman could refuse to accept. On commencing the action for libel, my solicitors—to whom I tender my sincere thanks for their admirable treatment of the case—immediately put before my opponents such clear and patent facts as made the original rumour altogether unworthy of credit. The result was a foregone conclusion, if truth were truth and facts were facts. But it was considered more diplomatic to elicit these facts at a public trial and by a verdict that awarded me £1,500 damages. The action dragged its slow length along for a year after that verdict was awarded me, owing to the right of appeal that the law allows to an unsuccessful defendant.

At last I have obtained the retractation for which I have so long and anxiously looked, for which I have so patiently and painfully waited. It is conveyed in terms so generous, so characteristic, and so unreserved that I do not hesitate to give it in the original text.

"The case of Scott v. Sampson must be still fresh in the "memories of most Refereaders. Well, I have a last word to say "upon this, to me, very painful subject. Within the past few days "I have received full assurance that there was no foundation what-"ever for the imputations cast upon plaintiff's character in these "columns. The damages have been paid, and there is no reason "why I should say this now, beyond that I think it only right to "unsay anything I have said if I subsequently find myself mistaken. "Just as we fought our hardest while we felt our cause was the "cause of justice, so we—in accordance with the constant attitude "taken by the "Referee" since it had an existence—admit, and "regret, our error as soon as we learn that no dependence is to be "placed upon the sources of our information."

So ends, I trust for ever, this unhappy controversy, which shows, I think, my opponent in a far more dignified light than he has ever

been before. He fought for principle, and when convinced that his position was untenable he offered his regret in the frankest and most satisfactory manner. Having received such an assurance, I, on my part, was only too glad to forego some of the advantages that accrued to a successful suitor. Had such an assurance been tendered to me in June, 1881, instead of in November, 1882, it would have been cordially accepted, as it is accepted now in all sincerity.

A less enviable position, I think, is retained by the man or men who contributed the "information upon which no dependence is to be placed." What is to be thought, let me ask, of the informer who "bears false witness against his neighbour;" who secretly spreads gossip which he knows to be untrue; who haunts clubs in order to propagate scandal; who for a year and a half sees two independent gentlemen suffering in pocket and credit for the slanders he has spread, and who, when all is explained, does not come forward to express regret for the misery and wretchedness he has inflicted. I do not envy the conduct or the conscience of such a man. I do not envy him the character he is likely to obtain at the hands of his fellow-men. He is the only dark shadow still hovering about the case of "Scott v. Sampson."

To turn to more cheerful topics, I may observe that such small compensation as has been awarded me after the wreck of trials and appeals will be immediately devoted to the services of this magazine, that after a three years' struggle with winds and waves has fairly weathered the storm. The January number for 1883 will be my fourth anniversary as editor, and I propose to start what is virtually a new series, which I trust will find favour with our subscribers and the public. I have long wished to give two photographs instead of one, and to discard the "black and white" pictures, which have not, as a rule, been so satisfactory as they might be. I am able now to carry out this improvement, and shall henceforward give two photographic illustrations, done in the very best style of this useful art. I shall endeavour to give a picture of each of the sexes, and they will comprise not only actors and actresses, but dramatic authors and authoresses, and the various popular patrons of the play. Got up in a new style, with a new start, a new publisher (Mr. David Bogue, of 3, St. Martin's Place, Trafalgar Square), a new printer, and new management, uniformly well illustrated, and containing in a handy form the only true record of the modern stage, I trust that The Theatre will enter upon a fresh career of usefulness, interest, and prosperity. Clement Scott.

THE WICKED EARL.

By J. Palgrave Simpson.

SANDIBOURNE is a very picturesque and delightful seaside residence. I must confess the fact, although I have a great dislike to sea air, and a horror of marine bathing-places in general. Pretty Sandibourne must have its due, however: it is charming. It was not my own pleasure which brought me there, of course. My friend, Dick Estcourt, who had lately married, and was in all the entrancing throes of his honeymoon, had so strenuously urged me to join him at Sandibourne on his return from a Continental trip, and be introduced to his "darling little wife," that I could not refuse.

So behold me at Sandibourne! The Estcourts had not yet come on my arrival, and I felt awfully lonely and dull among the lively crowds on beach and pier and in the so-called "casino." The dusk of evening was gathering, and my spirits were becoming more and more dusky also under the gathering clouds of boredom, when my eye chanced to fall on a large bill, technically called a "poster," which announced a theatrical performance, and informed the public in general, and myself in particular, that at the Theatre Royal, Sandibourne, would be given, for that night and the rest of the week, the celebrated great sensational drama of "The Wicked Earl."

Now I was pretty well informed on the subject of the "celebrated" dramas of the day, but the "great sensational drama" of "The Wicked Earl" had never reached my imperfect knowledge. I hailed "The Wicked Earl," however, as a blessed boon in my state of do-nothing dulness, and at the correct hour I sought the Theatre Royal, Sandibourne, and found it in a small street modestly retiring from the beach, and not far from the pier.

There was but a scanty attendance, and I reigned almost supreme in the dress circle. Being rather partial to what in my boyhood's days was called the "blood-and-thunder melodrama," I found "The Wicked Earl" not otherwise than to my taste, as sensational plays go. There were incidents and situations

enough in it to stock twenty good dramas. But they have all faded from my memory now. My only strong recollection of the play is that—I really don't know why—I conceived a profound disgust, amounting almost to loathing, for the personator of the Wicked Earl himself. Not on account of the many atrocious villainies he perpetrated. Oh dear no! Not on account of any bad acting on his part, for I could but admit he played remarkably well; not on account of his ugliness, for he actually looked handsome on the stage. My feelings were attributable only, I must needs confess to myself, to one of those uncontrollable prejudices which sometimes seized me. That gruff voice chafed my whole nervous system; those heavy dark locks and eyebrows and moustaches were odious to me; that tall tapering hat affronted me; that voluminous black cloak absolutely angered me; and when the Wicked Earl flung it, as he did perpetually, over one shoulder, I had an insane desire to punch his head. I looked at the play-bill, and in my mind I vowed the name of Mr. Clement Haggerstone to eternal execration, all the more when, during the ensuing night, he troubled my dreams with terrors.

In the morning came a telegram from Dick Estcourt to say that he should be at Sandibourne about noon, and take up his quarters in the same hotel with myself. The day was bright and clear, the sea dancing with spangles; all Sandibourne shone gorgeous in colour. So after breakfast I wandered dawdlingly to the pier, which was immediately opposite the hotel. The morning band was playing in the pavilion—nicknamed "the casino"—at the end of the pier, and it used a sort of siren influence over me. I was about to enter at the great glass doors when my attention was arrested by a sort of picture hanging on one of the doorposts. It was a highly-coloured representation, sketched on thick cardboard, of a scene in "The Wicked Earl," with the necessary theatrical announcement below.

Yes! There was the object of my new aversion, figuring in all his glory, with his odious tall hat and his accursed cloak, and his dark thick moustache. There was no getting rid of him, it seemed.

In my exasperation I hit the board with my fist, uttering a—well, never mind what. As if purposely to provoke me, the board flew from its peg to within an inch or so of the edge of the pier. Now, irritated as I might be, I felt I had no right to destroy the

property of others, so I ran to prevent the board being carried into the sea. The consequence was that I slipped, and was nearly carried into the sea myself. My rapid thought as I fell was that "The Wicked Earl" was destined to be the death of me somehow or other. On the very brink of my probable engulfment my arm was seized firmly, although with a certain degree of gentleness, and I was raised by a pair of strong arms from the ground. As I turned I saw before me a fine young fellow, evidently a gentleman, I thought, with fair hair, a slight blonde moustache, and a pair of tender-looking blue eyes.

Before I could pour out my thanks he began to apologise, in a soft voice, for his audacity in laying hands on me. I was not to be checked, however, in the profusion of the gratitude I expressed. The young stranger smiled, and, picking up the picture-board from the planks of the pier, hung it up carefully on the peg from which I had hurled it. I was mightily taken with him—for my prepossessions are as hasty as my prejudices—and in a short time we were in animated conversation. We walked up and down the pier, discoursing on the bright scene around us, and afterwards on a variety of general topics. He was so agreeable, and so well-informed, that I gradually forgot the time and my purpose of meeting the Estcourts at the station. When I at last looked at my watch I found that the hour was past; and I turned to leave the pier, when I spied Dick Estcourt advancing from the other end with a very pretty little woman on his arm. As I shook hands on quitting my new friend I saw that his eyes were fixed in the same direction as my own, and that he started and coloured up to his forehead with a troubled look. He then turned away abruptly. What did his strange conduct mean?

My friend's wife was certainly a charming little woman—a delicate blonde, with the sweetest eyes, and a faultless figure. There was no reason to wonder at Dick Estcourt's choice, although, as he had informed me in his letters, his bride had no fortune. She greeted me with grace, but without the slightest affectation. A strange feature in her manner was her complete self-possession, tempered now and then by a sort of nervous shyness, amounting almost to embarrassment. As we strolled on towards the end of the pier, she chatted pleasantly, chirping like a sweet little bird. Then she stopped suddenly, seemed wholly to forget the thread of her discourse, and stammered awkwardly. My young friend

was passing us at the moment; but it could not have been any rude stare on his part which could have caused her sudden confusion, for the young man was walking with his head turned, almost markedly, away from our party; and when I looked at Mrs. Estcourt, I found that her eyes were so steadily fixed on the ground that she could not have noticed him.

After lounging about and gazing on all the best scenic points of Sandibourne, we dined early in Dick Estcourt's private room. His wife, with a resumption of her shy manner, had expressed her repugnance to appearing at the table-d'hôte of the hotel. After dinner amusements were discussed. I proposed the theatre, and was proceeding to give a humorous account of "The Wicked Earl," when I was checked by a positive negative from the lady. Dick looked at her and smiled; but she shook her head.

"The performance will begin in an hour," I said, "and the theatre is close by."

She again shook her head.

"You object to theatrical entertainments?" I asked.

"Oh no."

"You don't like the theatre?"

"Pretty well."

"And yet——"

"I don't wish to go."

There was a determination about this answer which stopped any further questioning on my part; and Mrs. Estcourt rose as if to put a stop to the conversation.

Dick was still smiling and looking at his wife with a pleased expression, when she came behind his chair, pulled back his head, kissed him on the forehead, and said:

"I'd better go and see after the rest of the unpacking, if you don't mind, dear. Please excuse me," she added to me with a lady-like manner; "household matters have to be looked after," and she disappeared.

Dick and I sat and smoked.

"I must congratulate you, old boy," I said, "in having taken to yourself one of the prettiest, sweetest little women I ever met with. Where did you pick her up?"

Dick did not answer at once. He eyed me strangely with a sort of doubtful, embarrassed look; and he cleared his voice more than once with a portentous "hem!" before he spoke.

"Look you, my dear fellow," he said at last, "you have always been to me as a second self. I have been accustomed on all occasions to open my heart to you, and I don't want to make any concealments now. My little wife was—well, I must out with it—in the ballet. I fell desperately in love with her almost at first sight, and I contrived to make her acquaintance. I found her thoroughly good, and shy almost to timidity. On enquiry I learned that she was of good parentage, and originally educated as a lady, but left an orphan, at an early age, without resources. Circumstances had thrown her on the stage, where she earned her subsistence, and made her way as a ballet-girl. Well, I was desperately in love, I offered to marry her, and she accepted me, for she had learned to attach herself to me. We were married. But I had made it a binding condition that she should drop all connexion with the stage, and promise faithfully never to have any intercourse whatever with any individual who trod the boards. She hesitated; even, I must admit, shed tears before she complied with my command. But she loved me, and at last consented. I had her stringent promise. We have been very happy, and I have the utmost confidence in her truth and honour. There! now you know the whole history of my marriage, and now you understand why I smiled when she persisted so valiantly in refusing to go to the theatre."

I wished my friend joy, heartily; but I could not avoid harbouring an inward feeling that the position was a somewhat risky one. "What's bred in the bone," was an old saying which would float over my brain in spite of myself.

After a time Dick rose, saying that he could not leave his dear little Fanny to have all the labour of unpacking without his aid, and went to join her in their own room.

I strolled on to the balcony to finish my cigar. The shades of evening had begun to fall; but on looking below, at a little distance on my right, I saw—surely I could not be mistaken—Mrs. Estcourt—who should have been in her own room unpacking—standing at the corner of a street close by the hotel, and not alone! I could not accurately discern her companion, who disappeared up the street at the moment. It was a male form. She lingered, waved her hand, kissed it even, to the departing shadow, then ran quickly to the hotel.

I was still standing bewildered at what I had witnessed, when Dick returned.

"The little lady is not in her room," he said, laughing. "Where can she be?"

Mrs. Estcourt came in immediately after these words, looking flushed and hurried.

"Why, where have you been, pet?" he said, taking her in his arms, and caressing her.

From flushed she became pale, as she answered: "The evening was so fine, dear, that I thought there could be no harm in a little stroll on the pier."

Now, she had not come from the pier!

I must here protest that I am far from holding the bad opinion so often expressed in the world, in loose ignorance, and especially among the conceited young idiots of the "crutch and toothpick" school, respecting the ladies of the ballet in general. I have known many good and virtuous girls among the ranks of the ballet, working valiantly, in the midst of many privations, to support an aged mother, or some destitute younger brothers and sisters, and pursuing their way unscathed by the temptations which assail them. My natural tendency is to put faith in the poor girls, whatever the examples to the contrary. But I must admit that, as regarded Mrs. Estcourt, my better opinion began to be violently shaken. There was mystery in her conduct, and the mystery was of the most compromising character. Who was the man whom she had met in secret? Somehow my mind reverted to my young friend on the pier, as I recalled the little incident on the morning of the arrival of the Estcourts. But I soon discovered that there was no basis whatever for any such surmise. On the first occasion I accosted my unknown young friend, and, after a little pleasant chat, led the conversation to Mrs. Estcourt. He stared at me in blank astonishment, and there was not the slightest trace of embarrassment in his manner as he asked me to whom I alluded. I described the lady, but he did not recognise the description. "There are lots of pretty women at Sandibourne," he said, laughing. "I cannot pretend to find a needle, however sparkling, in such an attractive bottle of hay." No; it was very evident that my vague suspicion was as absurd as it was erroneous.

I was determined, however, to keep my eyes open on the doings of my friend's wife. During the day she was lively, bright, and always charming. She seemed to have but one object to live for—her beloved husband. There was an atmosphere of

purity over her whole being. Could the interview I witnessed have been a mere dream? But towards evening, and generally about the same hour, she became listless, nervous, fidgety; and I could not but remark that she seemed to be perpetually devising little schemes to leave us and be alone. On one occasion she had succeeded; but I happened to be "off guard" at the time; and I cannot tell how far she profited by her temporary emancipation from her husband's company.

On the Saturday evening—I remember the date well, as I had seen a play-bill setting forth "Last Night of 'The Wicked Earl,'" and had laughed heartily at the disappearance of my odious bugbear from the pleasant precincts of Sandibourne—on the Saturday evening, Mrs. Estcourt was constantly worrying her husband—who was toying with her, as young husbands will do in early days of matrimony—to write a letter on some important business, which he had too long neglected. He ended by pretending to slap her face, as a "tiresome little tyrant," kissed her, and sat down to his work. Before a moment had elapsed the young wife had left the room; and, after a little hesitation, I determined to follow her. As I left the hotel door I espied my lady turning down the street, at the corner of which I had seen her taking leave of the man. It was the street leading to the theatre. I followed. Just before reaching the theatre she turned down a side lane, which led to the stage-door. There she stood in the darkest nook she could find, and waited. I don't know whether her heart beat; I know that mine did. After a little time a man appeared at the stage-door, and looked cautiously around. As he advanced a little I could see him distinctly by the light of the gas-lamp. Good Heavens! It was the Wicked Earl! I knew him at once by his abominable hat, and his detested cloak. I had not hated him without cause then. I should have liked to have strangled him on the spot! In a moment Mrs. Estcourt was in his arms.

"My dear one," I heard her say, "I could not, would not, miss the chance of a last embrace. It may be long, very long, before we can ever meet again."

"Fanny darling," murmured the hateful miscreant, "we must part, I grieve to say; but you will think of me a little, I trust, and love me very much."

"You know that I cannot forget you, and shall always love you, spite of my husband, spite of all," responded the woman.

With this the Wicked Earl folded his arms around her and kissed her fervently.

I could bear it no longer. I stepped forward, and mastering myself as well as I could, I said: "Mrs. Estcourt, I think you had better let me conduct you home at once."

She screamed violently, and clung more closely to the odious man.

"Oh, sir, do not think—do not suppose," she cried. "I know I have done wrong; but I could not help it!"

I stood astounded at what I thought her effrontery.

My feelings certainly prompted me to fly at the throat of the Wicked Earl; and I don't know what might have happened, when with quiet self-possession he said: "Mrs. Estcourt's presence here is easily explained. She had promised her husband faithfully to hold no intercourse with anyone who trod the boards. She has broken that promise, I admit; but nature was too strong for her. She could not close her heart to her own brother, when she found him so near her!"

"Her brother!" I exclaimed. That odious Wicked Earl her brother!

"Her brother, Charley Hammond," he replied, as, with a smile, he removed his hat and the black locks of his wig, and disclosed (save the thick dark moustache and darkened eyebrows) the person of my fair young friend of the pier.

The detested Wicked Earl and the pleasant companion of my strolls were one! What transformations will not stage illusion effect?

"I cannot stay now," said the Wicked Earl, smiling, as he replaced his wig and hat. "The next act must be ready to ring up; but I must see you again, and I go to-morrow."

"Come to me at the hotel, after the theatre," I said, grasping his hand, "and meet me in the coffee-room. But not as the Wicked Earl, please; but as Charley Hammond, whose name I now learn."

"You will probably see the Wicked Earl no more," he laughed, as he disappeared through the stage-door.

I conducted Mrs. Estcourt home, sobbing hysterically all the way, her nervous system thoroughly unstrung.

"Go to your room, my dear child," I said, "and wash away those tears."

"But Dick will never forgive me my breach of faith," she sobbed.

"Dick will forgive you," I whispered in her ear as we entered the hotel. "I mean to set matters right on all sides."

At my conference with Charley Hammond it was agreed that I had better tell the whole truth to his sister's husband. So I left him in the coffee-room, and went upstairs.

Dick was just finishing his correspondence; and his wife sat shading her eyes from the lamp, and pretending to read.

"Look here, Dick," I said boldly; "you made your wife promise to hold no intercourse with anyone on the stage."

"I did; and very wisely, I think."

"And very unwisely, I think. You have tried to sever her for ever from her own brother."

"Her brother! I never knew she had one."

"I was afraid to tell him," sobbed his little wife.

"She has a brother on the stage—a fine young fellow—as perfect a gentleman as any man might be proud to give his hand to. Is he to be tabooed?"

"Well, no; but——" stammered Dick, fairly bewildered.

"That's enough," I laughed. "Enter Charley Hammond."

I fetched my man. Dick held out his hand. Tableau. Curtain.

I need scarcely add that the Wicked Earl and I became the staunchest friends.

WILLIAM TERRISS.

By an Old Play-goer.

MR. WILLIAM TERRISS (a nom de théâtre) was born in December, 1849, in London. He is the youngest son of the late George Lewin, Esq., barrister-at-law, and nephew to the eminent historian, the late George Grote; he is also closely related to the present Earl of Zetland. This young actor's life has been of a most romantic description. Educated at Windermere College, he was, at the age of fourteen, left fatherless, and commenced his adventurous life. Having served for two years as midshipman in the Royal Navy, during which time he visited China, Japan, Borneo, New Zealand, and San Francisco, he relinquished that position, and went to

WILLIAM TERRISS.

'Carpe diem.'

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN SPECIALLY FOR 'THE THEATRE' BY
THE ST. JAMES'S PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPANY, 72, PICCADILLY, W.

Chittagong, Bengal, to take an appointment on a large tea-plantation; but he only remained there a few months, and was shipwrecked at the mouth of the river Hooghly, on his way to Calcutta. After living for ten days under canvas and a burning sun, Mr. Terriss, and the remaining few survivors of the crew, were picked up by a passing vessel and taken to England. On his arrival in his native country, Mr. Terriss reflected that he had got rid of his large patrimony, and had to earn his own living. His brother suggested the stage; but to become an actor was a thing unthought of by Mr. Terriss. He did not then carry out his brother's suggestion, but took instead to the wine trade. This he left after a few months of dock and desk work, and entered himself as an apprentice at the engineering establishment of Mr. Penn at Greenwich. There his roving spirit reasserted itself, and only a few months elapsed when he had given up engineering and accepted a berth offered to him for a trip on board an uncle's yacht up the Mediterranean. On his way to join the vessel, the following amusing incident, as detailed in "The North British Times and Mirror," of March 1st, 1866, took place:

"Weston-super-Mare was yesterday under a strange influence, which made hundreds of the usually exceedingly wide-awake inhabitants, the victims of mistaken identity. Early in the morning the startling intelligence was circulated that a prince of the Royal blood had honoured the town by a visit. At a little before two o'clock yesterday, on the arrival of the London mail at the railway-station, the officials, with mingled feelings of astonishment and joy, observed that attached to the train was a saloon-carriage, approximating in its exterior and interior fittings to the comfortable travelling-houses which Royalty uses when on a railway journey. This carriage had been started with the train from Paddington Station, and conveyed a gentleman, his nephew—a lad apparently about sixteen or seventeen years of age—and a neat-looking valet. This was certainly an incident beyond the 'common run'—a phrase in the railway officials' existence—which does not occur every day. The passengers—who were they?—alighted from the train; the distinguished travellers proceeded at once to the Bath Hotel. From its being, without doubt, a royal train carriage in which the gentlemen had arrived, the youngest of the party (the nephew), a good-looking young gentleman, wearing the uniform of the

Royal Navy, was presumed, nay, stated unhesitatingly, to be no less a personage than His Royal Highness Prince Alfred. The party went to bed, got up in the ordinary course, and were partaking of breakfast, when, to the extreme surprise of the valet, all sorts of enquiries were made as to the arrival of one of the Royal blood. The valet was astounded, and scarcely knew what reply to make, save to deny that the rumour was true. But this would not satisfy the enquirers, who were determined that a 'prince' was amongst them, and would not be convinced of their error. During the morning rounds of one of our principal medical practitioners, he had occasion to call at the hotel to visit a former patient. This gentleman had the good fortune to meet the senior of the party whose arrival had created so much excitement, and he was consulted as to what steps had best be taken to disabuse the expectant public of its mistake. From that hour the news—which before had only been confided to a favoured few—spread rapidly over the town that a member of the Royal Family was staying at the Bath Hotel. The authorities and the public were at once on the alert. A small list of official personages, including magistrates, police, tradesmen, and members of the other portions of the Great Western community, met, we understand, to discuss what shape a demonstration in honour of the Imperial visitors should assume. The doctor recommended that nothing at all should be done, as the occasion did not demand it, and requested that all enquirers should be told that they were entirely misinformed. It was subsequently arranged that, in order to escape further annoyance, the gentlemen should order a carriage to take them to the railway, prior to leaving it by the 3.30 p.m. train. This carriage was ordered, and it was hoped that nothing further would be done in the matter; but, oh dear no! a Royal visitor does not visit Weston-super-Mare every day, and it was too good an opportunity for future distinguishment to be lost. The church bells were set ringing, on what was everywhere talked of as the 'auspicious occasion,' and a spirited fly-proprietor furnished a wonderful 'turn-out'—four spanking grey tits, and a resplendent carriage, with two well-dressed postillions. This elaborate vehicle conveyed the distinguished persons to the railway-station, the doctor being one of the party. In front of and around the approaches to the station was congregated an immense crowd, the component and not over-

select parts of which immediately surrounded the visitors, and pressed forward to see 'the Prince,' treading on their neighbours' toes, elbowing them mercilessly, and taking particular care of themselves. The valet then took the necessary tickets, and the party proceeded on their journey, the public outside grumbling in no measured terms at no Royal personage being among the group. An incident in connection with the affair may prove rather amusing. Our correspondent was informed that a chemist of ultra-patriotic feelings forwarded to the Bath Hotel a bottle of scent for the 'Prince,' as a small but sincere mark of esteem; accompanying the same with an epistle couched in the most glowing terms, and complimenting His Royal Highness on his illustrious descent from a long and royal line of ancestors. When the party left the Bath Hotel for the railway-station, hundreds of people congregated, and, in the most demonstrative manner, cheered and bowed them out, and when driving down the High Street, a tradesman handed into the carriage a large bottle of scent and a bouquet of flowers, crying, with immense fervour, 'Long live the Prince Alfred.'"

After a few months' cruise Mr. Terriss returned home, and he then began to seriously think of following some profession. His brother again suggested the stage, and so Mr. Terriss determined to try his fortune as an actor. In the autumn of 1868, he obtained an engagement from Mr. James Rodgers, of Birmingham, receiving in exchange for his services the munificent sum of eighteen shillings per week. He accordingly made his first appearance on the stage at the Prince of Wales Theatre, Birmingham, on September 14th, 1868, playing Chouser in "The Flying Scud." Here is an extract from his diary on the occasion: "September 15th.—Appeared last night in my new capacity of actor—felt intensely nervous, though I did not show it a bit. I had a speech to say, but forgot it." When asked by his fellow-actor to continue his part, he replied: "I can't; it's all gone." During his first engagement Mr. Terriss was therefore known amongst the company as "All Gone." Coming to London he presented himself to Mr. Bancroft, although entirely a stranger to him, and was courteously received by that gentleman. He appeared at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, under the management of Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft, for some months, but he left England again in July, 1870, resolved this time to cultivate sheep-farming in the

Falkland Islands. Arriving at Monte-Video he found that town in a state of siege, and consequently could not land there. So he shipped on board the schooner "Foam," and set sail for Stanley, Falkland Islands; from the River Plate a distance of a thousand miles, and a journey usually occupying from ten to twelve days. However, the vessel met with such severe weather that the voyage lasted twenty-four days, and on reaching port the crew had been on allowance of two biscuits and half a pint of water daily, for some time. After spending six months on the island Mr. Terriss took a passage for home on board a Swedish whale-ship which had put into Stanley for repairs. But when off Gibraltar the vessel was overtaken with a severe gale of wind and made so much water that all hands were obliged to take to the boats, and ere nightfall the ship foundered After drifting about in the Bay of Biscay for two days and nights the unfortunate occupiers of the open boat were picked up more dead than alive by the "City of Cashmere," and brought in that vessel to Falmouth. Coming to London, Mr. Terriss was engaged by Mr. F. B. Chatterton, at Drury Lane Theatre, where, in September, 1871, he played Robin Hood in the late Andrew Halliday's drama of "Rebecca." But he did not remain there long, for in April following we find him in Lexington, Kentucky, where he had gone to join Mr. Percy Tattersal, a nephew of Mr. E. Tattersal, of Knightsbridge, in horse-breeding, but not finding that occupation to his taste, he once more returned to England, arriving this time as a steerage passenger on board a North German Lloyd steamer, in consequence of having lost his money and luggage at New York.

But from this time Mr. Terriss seems to have steadily devoted himself to the profession of which he is now such a bright ornament. In a succession of revivals at the Drury Lane, Princess's, and Adelphi theatres, he acted Malcolm Graeme in "The Lady of the Lake," Sir Kenneth in "Richard Cœur de Lion," and Nicholas Nickleby. Going to the Strand Theatre he played Doricourt in "The Belle's Stratagem" during the two hundred and fifty nights' run of that piece. At Drury Lane, on January 1st, 1875, he acted Romeo to the Juliet of Miss Wallis. He there appeared as Ned Clayton in "The Lancashire Lass," and in other characters. On September 4th, 1875, in the production at Drury Lane of "The Shaughraun," Mr. Terriss acted Captain Molyneux. This drama had a long run, and was removed to the Adelphi Theatre after the

Drury Lane season. It should also be noted that Mr. Terriss was engaged at Drury Lane to act Julian Peveril in Mr. W. G. Wills's drama of "England," a part for which he had been specially selected by the author. On March 30th, 1878, he made a great hit by his acting as Squire Thornhill in the production at the Court Theatre of Mr. Wills's play of "Olivia." On Monday, September 16th, 1878, at the Haymarket Theatre, in the first performance of Mr. H. J. Byron's comedy-drama, "Conscience Money," he acted Sydney Sefton, and on the 3rd of the following month, at the same theatre, he sustained the part of Captain Absolute in a revival of "The Rivals." On December 2nd following, also at the Haymarket Theatre, he acted Fawley Denham in the first performance of "The Crisis." On April 14th, 1879, he appeared as Walter North in Mr. W. G. Wills's play, "Ellen; or, Love's Cunning," and on June 12th of the same year he acted Hugh Merryman in the same author's piece called "Brag." At the Haymarket Theatre Mr. Terriss also acted during Miss Neilson's last engagement in London, playing with her the parts of Orlando, Lucio, and Romeo. Towards the end of 1879 we find him at the St. James's Theatre, playing the Comte de la Roque in "Monsieur le Duc," and Jack Gambier in "The Queen's Shilling," and giving his striking rendering of Captain Hawkesley in the revival of "Still Waters Run Deep." Then Mr. Henry Irving secured the services of the young actor for the Lyceum Theatre. Mr. Terriss opened there on Saturday, September 18th, 1880, as Château Renaud in "The Corsican Brothers." His next part here was Sinnatus in "The Cup," on January 3rd, 1881; this was followed on April 16th by Flutter in "The Belle's Stratagem." On May 2nd he acted Cassio to the Othello of Mr. Edwin Booth, the Iago of Mr. Irving, and the Desdemona of Miss Ellen Terry, and on December 26th he played Jack Wyatt in "The Two Roses." During the run of the latter play he also acted in "The Captain of the Watch." In the production of "Romeo and Juliet" on March 8th last, he appeared as Mercutio, and on October 11th he acted, with conspicuous success, Don Pedro in the brilliant revival of "Much Ado About Nothing."

In the autumn of next year Mr. Terriss will accompany Mr. Henry Irving and the Lyceum company to America, where a warm welcome awaits so sound, accomplished, and manly a young actor. In London he is extremely popular, and has a following.

THE OPERATIC SEASON IN HAMBURG.

MUSIC-LOVERS, who are also bon vivants, could not possibly, at this season of the year, pick out a pleasanter city than Hamburg wherein to spend a late autumn holiday. Next to Paris, Hamburg possesses the best restaurants in Europe; and there is certainly no opera company now performing within the territorial limits of the Fatherland—or any other land, for that matter—comparable to that of Bernardo Pollini, either with respect to all-round efficiency or to special excellencies. Under the title of "Grand German Opera," it constituted the leading feature of London's last musical season, fairly took the town by storm, and inaugurated a new epoch in metropolitan lyrico-dramatic achievements. The splendid series of artistic successes that came off last May and June within the walls of Old Drury will not readily be forgotten by any one who had the good fortune to witness those triumphs of executive ability and intelligent management. It was the entire singing-staff of the Hamburg Stadt-Theatre, transferred en bloc to London boards, and supported by the finest "scratch" orchestra ever yet subjected to the sway of a conductor's bâton, that drew such crowds to the Lane night after night, and stirred abnormally critical audiences to unwonted demonstrations of enthusiasm.

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Sitting—as I am whilst writing these lines—in the "first-floor front" of what house-agents are wont to describe as a "Bijou-Residence," overlooking the stage-door of the Hamburg Stadt-Theatre, and having for some days past enjoyed frequent opportunities of seeing and hearing what Pollini's company is equal to in the way of operatic performances, I feel prompted to communicate my experiences of that institution in its northern home to the readers of The Theatre. Before, however, attempting to put this laudable impulse into execution, let me premise that the twin cities of Hamburg and Altona own two considerable theatres, both of which are leased from their respective municipalities by Bernardo Pollini; whose dramatic company performs in the one whilst his operatic company does duty in the other, each alternating between the two houses so as to accommodate public requirements.

The Hamburg Stadt-Theatre is larger than Drury Lane, although it contains fewer seats. It presents no exterior architectural features of any particular interest, but its interior arrangements reveal a care for the comfort and convenience of the audience, that is rather the exception than the rule in German places of entertainment. Of the two thousand one hundred and twenty-six tickets issued when that delectable condition of affairs called "turning away money" in British theatrical parlance (the Teutonic equivalent for which is "total ausverkauft") is attained, there is not one which does not ensure to its purchaser abundant sitting-room and a good view as well as hearing of the performance. The price of the most expensive places—stalls, dress-circle, and the first two tiers of stage-boxes—is six shillings; that of the cheapest, or upper-gallery, ninepence. Yes, incredible as it may appear to London opera habitués, a Wagnerian who is poor, though honest, may hear and see the "Meistersaenger von Nürnberg," sung and "set" as it was last summer at Drury Lane, for that modest sum with which —I know not why—Englishmen are accustomed to associate the adjective "nimble."

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As the population of Hamburg and Altona amounts to considerably over half-a-million—as the Germans, no matter of what variety, are inveterate theatre-goers, and as this opera company's répertoire is no less comprehensive than its performances are unexceptionable, no one need be surprised to learn that the Stadt-Theatre fills every night; at least, such has been the case ever since my arrival in Hamburg, some ten days ago. Here is the répertoire for that period—a somewhat remarkable one, as it seems to me, for a German provincial theatre, depending entirely for its attractiveness upon its own permanent staff of artists, performing nightly throughout ten of the annual twelve months; say, three hundred nights in all, although that figure is in reality under the mark. "La Vestale" (Spontini), "Die Meistersaenger von Nürnberg," "Lohengrin," "Tannhäuser" (Wagner), "Koenigin von Saba" (Goldmark), "Africaine" (Meyerbeer), "Der Rattenfaenger von Hameln" (Nessler), "Carmen" (Bizet), "Aida" (Verdi), and "Armin" (Hoffmann). Six of these ten works belong to the category of "Grand Opera." To the manner of their performance I find myself really unable to take any exception whatsoever. The orchestra, under the direction of Kapellmeister Sucher—a conductor only one degree less celebrated throughout

Germany than his friend and schoolfellow, Hans Richter—consists of eighty excellent instrumentalists, and need not fear comparison with the operatic "Kapellen" of Berlin, Dresden, and Munich. All the prime-donne are more than good; I will even venture to rank them as great artists, each in her line. With three of them—the inimitable Rosine Sucher, Madame Peschka-Leutner, whose execution is only excelled by that of Adelina Patti, and Fraulein Wiedermann, the German Carmen par excellence—the London public became acquainted a few months ago. The remaining two, Frau Brandt-Goertz and Fraulein Nicolai, have not yet, as far as I know, sung in the metropolis. It may be hoped that they will make their début there next season. The former—a dramatic singer—is gifted with a voice of extraordinary compass, power, and sweetness, and with that even rarer endowment, a musical soul. Her intonation is faultless, and so is her method of producing her voice. Fraulein Nicolai is also a fine singer and actress, always in the middle of the note and thoroughly versed in the art of vocalisation. Without being conspicuously handsome, her physiognomy is interesting and sympathetic. Her strong points are a brilliant complexion, abundant fair hair, bright blue eyes, and a symmetrical figure.

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Hermann Winkelmann has completely recoved from the nervous indisposition which resulted from his great exertions and over-excitement in London and Bayreuth throughout the past summer. His noble voice no longer exhibits those symptoms of fatigue that characterised it towards the close of his engagement at Drury Lane, and he appears extremely anxious to repeat his visit to the metropolis in the course of the 1883 season. So, indeed, are all the members of Pollini's company who took part in last year's experiment, and I have been deeply gratified to find that, without a single exception, they were more than satisfied with their reception at the hands of the British public and press. Accustomed to the frigidity and undemonstrativeness of Hamburg audiences, which observe a passive attitude towards artists, not because this public is hypercritical, but rather by reason of its native dulness, the Pollini Company was most agreeably surprised by the genial enthusiasm with which its performances were greeted in London. It seems that the warmth of our appreciation has to some extent communicated itself to the denizens of this chilly region. One of the Hamburg Opera House's most steadfast habitués told me last night that, both

in quantity and quality, the applause here had sensibly increased since the company's London successes obtained publicity in the North German press. "The Hamburgers," he went on to say, "have reasoned thus. If the musical public of the greatest city in the world, a public wont to bask in the rays of all the leading luminaries of the operatic firmament, have taken such unqualified delight in the performances of our opera company as we are positively assured it has, there must be a deal more merit in these achievements than we, of our own unassisted perceptions, have hitherto been able to discover. Let us, therefore, somewhat heighten the temperature of our applause lest peradventure we fall under the world-reproach of insensibility to artistic merit and incapacity to appreciate the higher flights of executant excellence!" Accordingly, the unemotional Hamburg public has taken to calling its favourite artists before the curtain at the close of each act, sometimes even thrice without intermission—"which was not so before," as I believe Macbeth remarked in the course of his interview with the phantom snicker-snee.

* * * * *

A few days ago, I paid a long visit to that truly great singer and actor, Eugéne Gura, whose Hamburg home teems with art objects of considerable beauty and value, for the most part owing their existence to one or other of his multifarious talents. Exquisitely-finished wood-carvings and enamel-paintings, drawings in crayon and sketches in water-colour, adorn the charming apartments inhabited by Germany's first baritone and his amiable consort. Unlike the majority of his gifted countrymen belonging to the profession, Gura is no linguist, a circumstance to be regretted, as it hampers him in his operatic career outside the frontiers of the Fatherland; but he is well-nigh everything else that is artistic—a pianist and sculptor, poet and painter, vocalist and actor, and all these in an eminent degree. London has not yet heard Gura in some of his best parts. His répertoire is a very large one, and includes several "title-rôles" of operas not yet known in England, as, for instance, Hans Heiling, the Vampire, and The Ratcatcher of Hameln. Goldmark's "Koenigin von Saba," one of the most effective of modern operas, from a spectacular as well as musical point of view, should be brought out in London. Carl Rosa, as I happen to know, would have given it long ago but for an insuperable obstacle: the unlucky accident that its "book" harks back to some portion of the Old Testament—a disability, as far as the British stage is concerned, that applies to

Rossini's and Rubinstein's masterpieces, "Mosé in Egitto" and "Die Maccabäer." The latter, I fancy, is not even taken from the Old Testament, but from Apocrypha, the divine inspiration of which is, to say the least of it, disputable. I have never been able, as yet, to understand why, in every Christian country but our own, the fact that an operatic plot has been culled from a chapter of Biblical history—let us say, Leviticus or Deuteronomy—should by no means invalidate its moral fitness for performance on the stage, whilst it has that effect in England. Why should we be the only European people prohibited by our rulers from participation in such pleasure as may be derivable from seeing and hearing Méhul's "Joseph" or Massenet's "Hérodiade"? Is it because we are better, or worse, Christians than the Germans, Frenchmen, Italians, *e tutti altri*, that we may not see and hear a Scriptural opera without prejudice to our eternal salvation?

* * * * *

Krauss, Ehrke, and Landau, all three of whom made their mark at Drury Lane last year, still belong to Pollini's company, and will in all probability be heard again in London—that is, should the wretched muddle into which one man's extravagance and incapacity plunged the most artistically triumphant enterprise of the last twenty years, be cleared up, as I have good hope it will be. Pollini, as London musicians well know, has done everything in his power—far more than he was morally bound to do—to remedy the errors of a person with whose name his own and that of Hans Richter were most unfortunately and unnecessarily associated. He cannot be expected to assume responsibilities altogether foreign to the engagements he pledged himself to fulfil, and has fulfilled to the letter. I shall not be surprised if a Rosa-Pollini coalition come to the front some day with an even stronger company, and more varied répertoire, than those of May and June, 1882. Both the famous impresarii, who are old cronies and can trust one another implicitly, are sincerely desirous to follow up the artistic victories won by German Opera in London last season. Neither of them is "fanatico per la musica dell' avvenire," or insensible to the attractions (I mean, for the British public) of the Italian lyric school, and I will venture to prophesy that if Carl Rosa and Bernardo Pollini think fit to produce the "Trovatore" or "Ballo in Maschera" upon the London stage in German, they will give us a better all-round rendering of those and other

Italian operas than we have heard at Covent Garden for many a year. They happen both to be here at the present time, and I wish I could positively announce the conclusion of an operatic partnership between them; how gladly would I function as witness to their signatures, affixed to so promising a document! It were indeed a pity should the good seed sown last year fail to strike root, flourish, and bring forth wholesome fruit.

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Not only can Hamburg boast of the best opera company in Germany—not to say Europe—but it is in more than one other respect the most advanced city of the Teutonic Union. As I have before mentioned, its restaurants can hold their own with those of the Parisian Boulevards, always excepting one or two, veritable and inexhaustible mines of culinary talent. You can drink better claret at Pforte's for three marks a bottle than at the Café Anglais for six francs. A penny-farthing will take you miles in great comfort, either by steamer or tram. Many of the cars, by the way, are drawn by squab locomotives, that look like stove-pipes afflicted with the dropsy, but go a good pace, and noiselessly to boot. The streets of Hamburg are admirably paved, and kept scrupulously clean by legions of sweepers. Some of the newer houses, and of those actually in course of construction, may be counted amongst the most gigantic and magnificent specimens of domestic architecture in all Europe. Both banks of the Alster bristle with splendid villas, each standing in its own grounds and surrounded by luxuriant foliage. The commercial magnates of the Hansa live in a splendour and luxury unknown to Berlin bankers or Breslau patricians. Hamburg is rich, very rich—great individual wealth is probably commoner here than even in Frankfort—but I take the special characteristic of this city to be an uncommonly high standard of general well-being. If there be any downright poor people in Hamburg-Altona I have not yet set eyes upon them, although I have been about a good deal, by day and by night, during my fortnight's sojourn here. The fine old Free-Town prospers exceedingly, but is in a chronic state of fear and trembling lest its sworn foe, the German Chancellor, should succeed in ruining it as he has so often threatened to do. At present it is the best thing Germany has to show the foreigner, in the way of modern and highly-developed civilisation; and long may it remain so!

Wm. Beatty-Kingston.

Hamburg, November.

JANOT AND JOCRISSE.

By Charles Hervey.

ANYONE who is tolerably conversant with the past history of the French stage, especially towards the close of the eighteenth century, can hardly fail to have remarked the extraordinary success which has occasionally attended the production of certain dramatic types, in most cases the creations of comparatively unknown writers, and invariably figuring on the boards of a minor theatre. Such, among others, were the "Nicodème dans la Lune" of Beffroy de Reigny ("Le Cousin Jacques"), the "Cadet Roussel" and "Madame Angot" of Joseph Aude; and, above all, "Janot, or les Battus paient l'Amende," and "Jocrisse," both emanating from the fertile brain of the erratic and singularly prolific dramatist, Dorvigny. Each of these in its turn achieved a triumph, not only in Paris, but throughout France; and herein consists the difference between them and the "Staberl" of Vienna, the "Pietsch" of Berlin, and the "Hampelmann" of Frankfort—all enjoying an immense local celebrity, but, from the peculiar dialects in which they are written, utterly unfamiliar to the rest of Germany.

The types invented by Dorvigny may be considered as the originators of this class of productions, and the prodigious vogue obtained by them has naturally directed the attention of those curious in such matters towards their author; although the result of their researches, partly owing to his uneventful life, and partly to the paucity of authentic details discoverable concerning him, is extremely meagre. The fraternity of "hand-to-mouth" writers, of which he was unquestionably a member, leave little trace of their everyday existence in the memory of contemporaries; nor does it appear that at any period of his career he was looked upon otherwise than as an habitually impecunious and by no means abstemious

literary hack, whose pen was at the disposal of whoever chose to employ it, and who aspired to no higher rate of remuneration than the few crowns grudgingly doled out by a too often needy and penurious manager.

Dorvigny—his real name is said to have been Archambault—was born, so far as has been ascertained, in 1734, and, according to popular report, was believed to be indebted for his entrance into the world to no less a personage than Louis the Fifteenth, a supposition mainly founded on the fact of an extraordinary resemblance borne by him to the effigy of that monarch stamped on the current coin of the realm. In 1772 we find him playing small parts in the company of Nicolet, founder of the Gaîté theatre; among his fellow-comedians being Volange (the subsequent representative of Janot), Beaulieu, and Bordier, the latter of whom—an accomplished actor, surnamed the Molé of the Boulevard—was hung during an outbreak of the populace at Rouen in 1789. A year or two of theatrical drudgery seem to have disgusted Dorvigny with his position at the Gaîté, for we hear of him shortly after continuing his dramatic apprenticeship in the provinces and at the Hague, supplementing his scanty emoluments by improvising any literary work that fell in his way. Nothing came amiss to him; prologues, comic operas, vaudevilles, and occasional impromptus flowed from his pen as they were successively required; among his poetical efforts being verses in celebration of the Princess of Orange's birthday, and stanzas written in honour of the gens-d'armes at Lunéville. Even the court circular of the time inspired him with subjects for his muse; the king's inoculation, the marriage of the Count d'Artois, and the arrival at Versailles of the Emperor Joseph, were each in turn chronicled by him, with more or less profit, as the case might be.

Weary at length of this precarious state of things, he returned to Paris, and, after two or three failures at the Comédie Italienne and the Ambigu, conceived the happy idea of abandoning the semi-official for the popular style, and produced at the little theatre of the Variétés Amusantes, recently re-christened by an ambitious lessee the "Théâtre Français Comique et Lyrique," his farce, "Les Battus paient l'Amende." The success obtained by this new venture, almost without a parallel in the history of the drama, was instantaneous; Dorvigny, who previous to the first performance had been contemptuously spoken of as a mere "chansonnier de carrefour,"

found himself suddenly famous; and Janot, the hero of the piece, became at once the talk and idol of the town. For some time, indeed, it was currently reported that Dorvigny was a myth, and that the author desired to maintain a strict incognito; the farce was successively attributed first to one person and then to another, and it is even asserted that the all-powerful minister, M. de Maurepas, was flattered rather than indignant when taxed with being the real Simon Pure.

After a careful examination of "Les Battus paient l'Amende," it is difficult to comprehend the reason of its unexampled vogue; the humour of Janot mainly consisting in the transposition of words from the place they ought to occupy in a sentence to another, as in the following instance: "J'y mangerons des petits gâteaux de Nanterre, comme j'en avons mangé l'aute jour, tout le long de la rivière, avec du beurre dessus." Again, when asked by Suzon if he remembers the cherries they once ate together, he replies: "Pardine, je le crois ben, de c'te p'tite marchande qui était si jolie, à trois sous la livre." These, and similar specimens of Janotism, were afterwards reproduced in a popular ballad, a verse or two of which will serve as examples of the whole.

Un jour, la nuit j'entendis l' ver mon père,
Il vint à moi, et m' dit comm' cà, Janot,
Va t'en chercher du beurre pour ta mère,
Qu'est bien malad', dedans un petit pot.

Mais tout le mond' chez nous était en proie
A la douleur de ce funeste jour;
Moi qu'avais faim, j' m'en fus chercher notre oie
Chez l' pâtissier, qu' j'avais fait cuire au four.

Among the most comical hits in the piece are, first, the firm conviction expressed by Janot that he cannot fail one day or another to gain a prize in the lottery, although he never took a ticket in his life, "car," says he, "le hasard est si grand;" and his no less original idea of regaling himself in a tavern without a sou in his pocket, "parceque dans les cabarets on ne paie qu'en sortant, et moi je ne sortirai pas!" But, whatever may be the merits or demerits of this strange production, it is certain that it took the town by storm; everyone, from the highest personages of the Court to the "dames de la halle," flocking to see it. The Boulevard St. Martin, where the little theatre stood, was daily and nightly thronged by an eager multitude, anxious to secure places for the novelty which formed

the topic of conversation with all classes; money flowed into the treasury with a rapidity enough to turn any manager's head, and it is to be hoped that poor Dorvigny had his share of the spoil. Models of Janot in porcelain and "biscuit de Sèvres," one of which adorned the dressing-room of Louis the Fifteenth, commanded a ready sale; a cargo of the latter, valued at 28,000 livres, being expressly manufactured for and despatched to Russia. These statuettes, which may still occasionally be met with, represent Janot with a lantern in his hand, and wearing a head-dress marvellously resembling a nightcap. There exists also a charming little engraving of the interior of the theatre during a performance of the piece, the boxes and pit filled with gaily-dressed spectators, and on the stage the thin and lanky figure of Volange* in the traditional costume of Janot, conversing with Mdlle. Suzon, who is seated at an open window.

For the next six months—a long time where so changeable a dame as Fashion is concerned—everything was named after the popular hero of the day; no well-ordered table was without its soup à la Janot; and even coiffures à la Janot, although the reverse of becoming, were in high favour. Nor were the other theatres behindhand in working the productive vein; imitations, such as "Janot bohémien," "Janot chez la Dégraisseur," and many more, appeared in quick succession, the best of them being "Tout ce qui reluit n'est pas or." Here Janot is represented in a prosperous condition, having discarded his lantern, and engaged himself as the confidential domestic of a countess; he is, however, ambitious, and announces to his friend Dodinet his intention of becoming a lord. "You," he says, "shall be my steward; I shall give you no wages, but whatever you can pick up you may keep." "That will suit me very well," replies Dodinet; "I sha'n't be the worst off of the two." "Perhaps not," says Janot, "but remember that, when you have ruined me, I am to be your steward in my turn."

Notwithstanding the success of "Les Battus paient l'Amende," Dorvigny did not rest on his laurels. "Christophe Lerond," his next production, in which he himself played the principal character, is a work of some pretension both as regards general treatment and style; it is well written throughout, and is said to have given Collin d'Harleville the idea of his comedy, "L'Optimiste." In 1780, an

* From an autograph receipt in my possession, it appears that the annual salary of this actor at the Variétés amounted some years later to 2,400 livres.

à propos from his pen, entitled "Les Etrennes de l'Amitié," was accepted at the Théâtre Français, and performed before the Court by Préville, Fleury, and Mdlle. Contat; this was followed by "Les Noces Houzardes," a four-act comedy produced shortly after at the same theatre.

It was not until 1795 that he commenced a new series of popular successes with "Jocrisse changé de Condition," thus cleverly remodelling his "Janot" to suit the taste of the time. The idea was a happy one, and so universally relished that during the next ten or twelve years his new hero continued to be a standing dish at the Variétés, successfully reappearing as "Jocrisse congédié," "Jocrisse jaloux," "Jocrisse au Bal de l'Opéra," "Jocrisse presque seul," and in the great triumph of the actor Brunet, "Le Désespoir de Jocrisse." Between the two types, however, a marked difference is observable; the meagre half-starved Janot has little but his natural imbecility in common with the sleek and comfortably-clad Jocrisse, the valet of an over-indulgent master, whose patience he is perpetually trying, and whose projects are continually marred by his impenetrable stupidity. Both are evidently members of the same family, and exhibit in their intellectual obtuseness an unmistakable trace of relationship, but here the resemblance ends; while the one can only be regarded as the fanciful creation of a dramatist —for what human being ever talked like Janot?—the other, necessarily exaggerated for stage effect, is a type by no means uncommon in Paris or elsewhere, as most householders, we should be inclined to imagine, have at some period of their lives had occasion to discover.

When Dorvigny grew tired of play-writing, he tried his hand at novels, and not without a certain success; "Ma Tante Geneviève," which is generally considered his masterpiece in this line, although somewhat disfigured by coarseness and lacking polish of style, is lively and full of incident, and ran through several editions. We learn from Brazier that, notwithstanding his extraordinary facility in composition, he seldom had a sou in his pocket. "Poor Dorvigny," he says, "wrote his novels and plays on the counter of a tavern, or wherever he could; in his day authors did not ride in their carriages and enjoy incomes of thirty or forty thousand francs a year, as many of them do now; a piece was paid at the rate of twenty crowns, neither more nor less; it ran two or three hundred nights and made the manager's fortune, while the dramatist in

nine cases out of ten died at the hospital, and no one ever heard any more of him." "Barré," he adds, "when director of the Vaudeville, often lent him a helping hand, and gave him a rejected manuscript to arrange for the stage, taking good care never to ask either for the piece, or for the money he had paid for it in advance." "I remember," says Mdlle. Flore, in her very amusing memoirs, "seeing Dorvigny one day in a foyer of the Variétés, dressed like a rag-picker; he came to borrow a few crowns from Brunet for old acquaintance' sake, and spent them before night at the nearest wine-shop."

The latter days of this singular personage are shrouded in mystery; all that is known of them being that he died January 6, 1812, at the age of seventy-eight. The entire collection of his dramatic works, about one-third of which were never printed, exceeds three hundred. With the single exception of "Le Désespoir de Jocrisse," none of them keep the stage; the rest, together with the name of their author, having been long since forgotten.

Charles Hervey.

Poem for Recitation.

THE MIDNIGHT CHARGE!

[This Poem was recited by Mr. Charles Warner at the Adelphi Theatre, on the evening of Friday, November 17th, 1882, the night before the Grand Review of the Egyptian Troops by Her Majesty in St. James Park.]

PASS the word to the boys to-night, lying about midst dying and dead!
Whisper it low: Make ready to fight! Stand like men at your horse's head;
Look to your stirrups and swords, my lads, and into your saddles your pistols thrust.
Then setting your teeth as your fathers did, you'll make the enemy bite the dust.
What did they call us, boys, at home?—"Feather-bed soldiers!"
Faith! it's true.
"Kept to be seen in Her Majesty's parks, and mightily smart at a grand review."
Feather-bed soldiers! Curse their chaff! Where in the world, I should like to know,
When a war broke out and the country called, was an English soldier sorry to go?
Brothers in arms, and brothers in heart, cavalry, infantry—there and then,
No matter what careless lives they lived: they were ready to die like Englishmen.
Pass the word, in the sultry night:
Stand to your saddles! Make ready to fight!

We are sick to death of the scorching sun, and the desert stretching for miles away;
We are all of us longing to get at the foe, and sweep the sand with our swords to-day.
Our horses look with piteous eyes—they have little to eat and nothing to do;
And the land around is horribly white, and the sky above is terribly blue.
But it's over now, so the Colonel says; he is ready to start, we are ready to go,

And the cavalry boys will be led by men—Ewart, and Russell, and Drury-Lowe!
Just once again let me stroke the mane, let me kiss the neck and feel the breath
Of the good little horse who will carry me on to the end of the battle—to life or death.
"Give us a grip of your fist, old man." Let us all keep close when the charge begins;
God is watching o'er those at home. God forgive us for all our sins!

So pass the word in the dark, and then,
When the bugle sounds, let us mount like men!

Out we went in the dead of the night; away to the desert across the sand;
Guided alone by the stars of heaven—a speechless host, a ghostly band.
No cheery voice that silence broke; forbidden to speak, we could hear no sound
But the whispered words, "Be firm, my boys," and the horses' hoofs on the sandy ground.
"What were we thinking of then?" Look here! If this is the last true word I speak,
I felt a lump in my throat—just here, and a tear came trickling down my cheek.
If a man dare say that I funked, he lies! But a man is a man; though he gives his life
For his country's cause as a soldier should, he has still got a heart for his child and wife!
But I still rode on in a kind of dream, I was thinking of home and the boys, and then,
The silence broke, and a bugle blew, then a voice rang cheerily: "Charge! my men."

So pass the word in the thick of the fight,
For England's honour and England's right!

What is it like, a cavalry charge in the dead of the night? I can scarcely tell,
For when it is over it's like a dream! and when you are in it, a kind of hell!

I should like you to see the officers lead, forgetting their swagger and Bond Street air,
Like brothers and men at the head of the troop, while bugles echo and troopers swear.
With a rush we are in it, and hard at work, there's scarcely a minute to think or pause
For right and left we are fighting hard for the regiment's honour and country's cause.
Feather-bed warriors! On my life, be they Life Guards red or Horse Guards blue,
They haven't lost much of the pluck, my boys, that their fathers showed us at Waterloo!
It isn't for us who are soldiers bred, to chatter of wars, be they wrong or right,
We've to keep the oath that we gave our Queen! and when we are in it—we've got to fight!
So pass the word, without any noise,
Bravo, cavalry! Well done, boys!

Pass the word to the boys to-night, now that the battle is fairly won,
A message has come from the Empress-Queen—just what we wanted, a brief "Well done!"
The sword and stirrups are sorely stained, and the pistol-barrels are empty quite,
And the poor old charger's piteous eyes bear evidence clear of the desperate fight.
There's many a wound, and many a gash, and the sun-burned face is scarr'd and red;
There's many a trooper safe and sound, and many a tear for the "pal" who's dead.
I care so little for rights and wrongs of a terrible war; but the world at large
It knows so well when duty's done, it will think sometimes of our cavalry charge!
Brothers in arms! and brothers in heart! we have solemnly taken an oath! and then
In all the battles throughout the world, we have followed our fathers like Englishmen!
So pass this blessing, the lips between,
'Tis the soldier's oath: God Save the Queen!

Clement Scott.

Our Play-Box.

"GIRLS AND BOYS."

An Original Comedy, in Three Acts, by Arthur W. Pinero.
Produced at Toole's Theatre, on Tuesday, October 31st, 1882.

Solomon Protheroe	Mr. J. L. Toole.	Billy Summerton ...	Master Solomons.
Josiah Papworth ...	Mr. John Billington	Susie Tidby	Miss Nelly Lyons.
Murch	Mr. G. Shelton.	Honor	Miss E. Johnstone.
Mark Avory	Mr. E. D. Ward.	Jennie Kibble... ...	Miss Ely Kempster.
Joe Barfield	Mr. E. W. Garden.	Gillian West	Miss Myra Holme.

It is in the nature of things that a criticism written some weeks after the production of a play is apt to be not so much a criticism upon the play as upon its critics. This danger—if it be a danger—is greater when the latest reviewer differs from those who have preceded him. To be plain, the present writer is not inclined to sympathise with the chastisement inflicted by the gentlemen of the daily and the weekly press upon those "Girls and Boys" who have been charged with such gross misbehaviour at Mr. Toole's popular little theatre. The treatment received by "Girls and Boys" at the hands of the critics, bears some analogy to the cracking of the walnut by the great steam-hammer; when however, the walnut has been cracked, it is too late to discuss the question of waste of steam, or the worthiness of the object. As the new play has been vigorously attacked by others, so must it be heartily defended by me.

In the first place the shortcomings of the comedy cannot, in fairness, be attributed to a falling off in the powers of the author of "The Squire," inasmuch as "Girls and Boys" was written nearly two years before "The Squire" was concocted, and is "the" village love story, alluded to in the not-yet-forgotten newspaper war, which served the author's purpose as a training for the more complete rustic play which was to follow "Girls and Boys" as a clear dramatic contrast between simplicity and worldliness: the one is represented in Solomon Protheroe, the cobbler-schoolmaster of Bassingdene, the other in Gillian West, the horse-rider of Peckstable; and as the worldliness of Gillian is but surface-worldliness upon a good nature, I maintain that she is as fine a heroine as play or play-goers need wish for. Now how does this assertion stand with the facts of the case? Gillian West has been described as a detestable young person who declares her preference for wrangling with one man over

a hot joint, to loving another upon a thin slice of bread-and-butter. It is true that Miss West does say something of this sort, but she also speaks other matter which, strangely enough, has not been gathered up for reproduction by her judges. Who is Gillian West? In the words of the Rector of St. Simon's, "an estimable young lady, quite alone in the world," who "wishes to relinquish her old life"—she has been a circus-rider—"for one more secluded, more sedate." What says Gillian? "I want to live in a little village like Bassingdene. I have had a great deal of trouble in my life. I have some money—a little money which I have saved. Will you have me?" Very modestly, therefore, does this "designing adventuress" urge her claims for a humble home. And what happens to her? Mark Avory falls in love with her at first sight. It has been stated that the girl sets "her cap" at Mark, but this is not so. It is Mark who makes the advances. He it is who regrets that the stranger is to have no companion, who offers to fetch her luggage from the adjoining town, who abandons, without prompting, his intended holiday, and who, before the girl has spoken half-a-dozen words, cries out: "There's a fine moon just now, Miss West. We'll have some jolly walks if you like." Point number one in favour of Miss Gillian. The mischief is of Mark's creating, and not of hers.

A week passes, and this heroine "who makes herself generally disagreeable to every mortal soul she comes across"—I quote a critic—has been employing part of her time in reading poetry to the good-natured schoolmaster; not to the bald-headed old schoolmaster, as the critics persist in calling Solomon Protheroe, but to the man of thirty-five whose only mark of age is his scanty hair. Gillian has also found time to conceive a liking for young Avory and to call him "Mark." Her words are: "Do I like Mr. Avory? Yes." She "likes" Mr. Avory, nothing more. It is the blundering diplomacy of kind-hearted Solomon which first strikes fire from the girl. "Mark's an extra," cries Gillian's landlord. "Put him down in the bill, then; I'm going in for luxuries," is the return. Very vulgar—enough to set every nerve of the author of "Dramatists of To-day" upon edge, but middle-class people do occasionally use vulgar phrases, though you may not be aware of it, Mr. Archer.

And now comes the mischief. It is plain to Solomon that Mark's marriage to Gillian will mean Mark's ruin—his guardian

leaves no room for doubt on that point; and Solomon, whom Mark's dead father befriended years ago, will do his best to keep the lad's worldly prospects intact. Sol would endure the trebling of his rent, poor as he is; he would even accept with resignation a notice to quit and its consequent troubles; but at Papworth's threat, "I'll turn that young pauper out of my house this very night," the poor simple soul wavers and consents to the grim old man's suggestion that he should propose marriage to Gillian West. "I know she won't have me," thinks Sol, but he reckons without his lodger. The girl enters, cast down by a quarrel with Mark. "I do feel miserable, I want to have a good cry. Why did you speak of me to Mark as you did?" she sobs. Solomon warns her against the consequences of Mark's love-making. "I don't want to get this fellow into a scrape," she protests, "but I'd rather be in the gutter with him than find myself there alone." Papworth sees the girl's yearning as plainly as she herself has expressed it earlier in the play. "Not a soul in the world to care for me, not a soul for me to care for." Papworth points to Solomon, and Solomon to his dismay finds himself an engaged man. "Then you don't love Mark after all?" gasps Solomon. "Perhaps I do," returns the girl with a trembling of the lip, "and," pulling herself firmly together, "perhaps I don't. But I've seen too much of hard times in my life to consider that, and it's better to wrangle with a man over a hot joint than to love him on a thin slice of bread-and-butter." This is poor Gillian's avowed philosophy—a philosophy in which no one believed less than herself, but it serves as a salve to heal the wound. The keynote to her conduct comes presently when Mark demands an explanation. "There's nothing to explain, Mark," she falters, "save that you and I haven't a penny to bless ourselves with. You are dependent upon that old gentleman there, and I won't be the one to make a beggar of you."

There then is the girl's best defence out of her own mouth. She has been called "utterly unnatural, absolutely unlovable, positively repulsive, in her cold-blooded icy insolence." But "I won't be the one to make a beggar of you!" is Gillian's cry to save her lover, and though she may be the first of her kind on the stage, she is not the first of it by many hundreds to sacrifice herself for the welfare of another with the consolation of a little sham philosophy.

Miss West's acts for the rest of the play will more than take care of themselves. Her dread of her approaching marriage with Solomon; her reconciliation with Mark when he is sick and poor, and when her love for him can no longer be his stumbling-block; her offer of atonement to Solomon—to slave for him, to scrub the cottage bricks; all this, as developed, is womanly and natural.

I have given my defence of Gillian West in chapter and verse. A more eloquent defence may be found in the impersonation of the actress. Miss Myra Holme—whose acting was one of the features if not a few of the limbs of "The Colonel"—is Gillian West without a trace of Mrs. Forrester's graceful "æsthetic flopping." Miss Holme grips the character with tact and power.

Of Mr. Toole's Solomon Protheroe too much could scarcely be written. It stands in ripeness and richness with this comedian's Paul Pry and Caleb Plummer. Whatever the fortunes of the piece, Mr. Toole's performance will be remembered as a complete example of genuine comedy; no horse-play, no knocking over of chairs and tables, but a perfect development of the best, the most artistic form of humour—that which arises from a seriously-told story. It has been written that "the cleverest things spoken by Mr. Toole are addressed to a class of children so young that not one of the number could possibly understand a word of what is said." This, however, is not so. Solomon's "geographical lecture on the heart, the undiscovered continent, the north pole, so to speak, of humanity," is spoken over the heads of the tiny children as a warning to Mark, and admirably does this prince of comedians speak it. Every phase of the character is painted in strong vivid colours. Solomon's intense devotion to Mark, and his meek acceptance of the unlooked-for results of that devotion, are points to the illustration of which by the actor the play owes much of its undoubted success.

The other characters are, in the best sense of the word, evenly performed. Miss Ely Kempster, a young actress new to London, brings a spontaneity and a freshness of manner and utterance to her performance of Jenny Kibble which are of the greatest service. The method of an "older hand" would destroy the meaning of the sketch. Miss Eliza Johnstone is of equal value in a part which requires the firmer, bolder touch of experience. Mr. E. D. Ward's Mark Avory is an advance upon anything this

clever young actor has yet given us, while Mr. Billington, Mr. Garden, and Mr. Shelton complete an ensemble as perfect as can be found in any theatre in London.

The result of all this is that the play attracts. It has brought large audiences, and will continue to do so for some time to come.

The play was written for a large body of the laughter-loving public, and it is received with genuinely hearty laughter and applause. The clever, thoughtful author of "Dramatists of To-day" would doubtless say that this is not quite as it should be; but Mr. Archer, who may be described as the Apostle of Dulness, must not expect to find much of a following in Mr. Toole's merry little theatre.

"THE SILVER KING."

A New and Original Drama, in Five Acts, by Henry A. Jones and Henry Herman.

Produced at the Princess's Theatre on Thursday, November 16th, 1882.

Wilfrid Denver	Mr. Wilson Barrett	Tubbs	Mr. H. De Solla.
Nellie Denver	Miss Eastlake.	Gaffer Pottle	Mr. J. B. Johnstone
Cissy	Miss M. Clitherow.	Cabman	Mr. H. Evans.
Ned	Miss C. Burton.	Leaker	Mr. W. A. Elliott.
Daniel Jaikes	Mr. George Barrett	Servants	Messrs. C. Crofton & Coles.
Frank Selwyn	Mr. Neville Doone.	Detectives	Messrs. Polhill & Bland.
Geoffrey Ware	Mr. Brian Darley.	Porter	Mr. Carson.
Samuel Baxter	Mr. W. Speakman.	Newsboy	Mr. Besley.
Capt. Herbert Skinner	Mr. E. S. Willard.	Olive Skinner	Miss Dora Vivian.
Henry Corkett	Mr. Chas. Coote.	Tabitha Durden	Mrs. Huntley.
Eliah Coombe	Mr. Clifford Cooper	Susy	Miss Woodworth.
Cripps	Mr. Frank Huntley.	Mrs. Gammage	Mrs. Beckett.
Mr. Parkyn	Mr. J. Beauchamp.	Lady Passenger	Miss Nellie Palmer.
Binks	Mr. H. Deane.	Schoolgirls	Misses J. and F. Beckett.
Brownson	Mr. Charlford.		
Bilcher	Mr. Warin.		
Teddy	Mr. C. Gurth.		

"I held it truth with him who sings
To one clear harp in divers tones,
That men may rise on stepping-stones
Of their dead selves to higher things."—Tennyson.

It is a sincere pleasure to have to write about so good a play as "The Silver King," and so effective and valuable a piece of acting as Mr. Wilson Barrett gives in his interpretation of the leading character in the drama. First, as to the play itself. Mr. Barrett has again shown his ability in selecting a work, which not only is remarkable as an artistic success, but is also a safe investment from a managerial point of view. His authors were well chosen. The literary capacity previously shown by Mr. Henry A. Jones in "A Clerical Error," and "A Bed of Roses," was a warrant that the dialogue of the play would be well written, and the characters firmly and distinctly drawn. Then in Mr. Henry Herman, also an author of no little literary ability, there was a strong promise

of the piece being well constructed. So, starting with individual qualities which made their collaboration specially advantageous, the authors hit upon a strong dramatic character whose life they traced out, and around whom they gathered incident and interest of no everyday order. To come then to the story of this character, the first act of the play opens in a skittle-alley, where Wilfrid Denver, maddened by his losses on the Derby, is in a hopeless state of intoxication. Ruin stares him in the face, and the reflection that he has brought poverty and disgrace to his wife and children aggravates his excitement. In the height of his trouble, Geoffrey Ware, a former lover of Denver's wife, comes like a fiend and taunts him. He exults at his downfall, and, goaded on to despair, Denver rushes after the cur, threatening to shoot him. He reaches Ware's apartments late at night. The rooms are occupied by a gang of burglars, headed by Captain Herbert Skinner, alias "The Spider," who does his work in evening dress, and is really a swell-mobsman of a very unconventional type. On entering the room, Denver is quickly rendered insensible by the aid of chloroform and thrown on the floor perfectly helpless. His entrance is soon followed by the return home of Ware. A struggle ensues between him and the Spider, and he is shot dead by the robber with Denver's revolver. The gang escape, and presently Denver awakes. Then comes the reflection that he had come there with the intention of shooting Ware. "Better go home, better go home," he mutters, and in searching for his hat, he encounters the lifeless body of Geoffrey Ware. Here is a scene of grave importance to the drama, and of great value to the actor. The drunken frenzy and the deadening effects of the chloroform have dazed the man's senses, and he naturally concludes that he is the murderer. The revolver is hastily put out of sight, the dead man's face is nervously covered with a table-cloth, and, wild with despair, Denver leaves the ill-fated spot. All through this scene, Mr. Wilson Barrett had shown the fervour and intensity of the part in a great degree, but it was hardly expected that he would have displayed such a tragic power as he exhibited at its conclusion. His acting was a welcome surprise, and a good omen for the success of the play. The drama opened well with a first act of uncommon strength, and a performance of infinite value.

In the second act, Denver returns to his wife. No words are needed to tell his story, and without hesitation a disguise is

procured for the unfortunate man, and he takes a ticket from Euston Station for a northern town. He manages to jump from the train and crawls, in his disguise, to a country inn. He now learns, through a newspaper report, that the train in which he had left London had come in contact with some waggons laden with petroleum, that it had caught fire, and that the carriage in which he was supposed to have been at the time of the accident, had been consumed to ashes. Consequently he is a free man so long as he can avoid detection, and he leaves England for a foreign port. Here again was a novel and striking situation, and once more the curtain fell upon an impressive scene. Mr. Barrett had given a piece of acting forcible and vivid, full of depth and meaning, and the new play was already almost an assured success.

When the curtain again rises, three years and six months have elapsed. Captain Skinner receives his accomplices in a handsome villa obtained through "years of honest labour," and to him comes Nellie, Denver's wife, to plead that she may remain in a wretched hovel for a few more days, she having been threatened with ejection by Skinner for non-payment of rent. After a good deal of supplication Skinner grants her request, but he has no sooner done so than he discovers who she is, and despatches a fellow-thief to turn her out of doors. The second scene of this act is a lovely winter scene, painted by Mr. Walter Hann. The interior of Mrs. Denver's hut is represented on one side of the stage, and on the other is the village school. To the impressive cadence of the organ the children are heard singing a Christmas hymn, and at its conclusion Wilfrid Denver enters. But how changed he has grown in this short time! Sorrow has left its traces upon his face, his features are noble, but marked with grief, his hair is white with trouble. He meets his own little daughter ill-clad and nearly starving. He may not tell her who he is, so he gives her his purse, and all the money he has about him. He has grown so rich through silver-mining in Nevada that he is called "The Silver King." Whilst the child goes to take the treasure to her mother, Denver ventures to peep at his other child, who is in the hut dying for want of proper attention. He meets Jaikes, his faithful old servant, who has not deserted his mistress in her troubles, but who, on the contrary, is her support. Denver is surprised that his remittances to his wife have miscarried. Mrs. Denver presently comes back to her shelter, but

is soon followed by Skinner's companion, who has instructions to turn her out. But in the nick of time the child returns with the money which her father had given her, and the act is brought to a dramatic close.

In the fourth act, through the help of the old retainer, Jaikes, Nellie Denver is reinstated in her old home, and has everything that money can purchase. Under the name of Franklin, Denver is forced to live away from his wife. He has a hope that after all he is not the real murderer of Geoffrey Ware, and with the intention of getting at the truth of the matter, he haunts the thieves' riverside storehouse under the disguise of a daft old man. At last he succeeds in effecting an entrance to their place, and a quarrel between the gang leads to Skinner being exposed, and Denver declaring his innocence. The last act of the play is devoted to the capture of the clever Skinner, and the restoration of Denver to his wife and children.

The tone of "The Silver King" is pitched in a much higher key than the ordinary melodrama of the day, and, in truth, it must not be confounded with the sensational panoramas which nowadays so often pass for plays. The dialogue of the play is throughout clever and witty, and much of the language is lofty and poetic. Taken altogether, "The Silver King" is undoubtedly one of the best plays that has been seen for years, and its authors may be congratulated upon the production of a work which will live and bear revival many years hence, a work which is thoroughly honest in purpose, dramatic, pathetic, full of human nature, and, withal, an original drama of English life, and sentiment, and feeling.

That the success of the play depends in no little measure upon the acting of the principal character is self-evident. Both as actor and as manager, Mr. Wilson Barrett has now placed himself and his theatre on a high level which it has not hitherto been at his command to reach. At times his acting came little short of genius. Look at the marvellous power displayed by him in the first act, see his wonderful intensity and subtle force in the second act, and consider his noble, dignified bearing in the latter part of the play. He took hold of the sympathies of the audience from the first, and held the spectators spell-bound until the final fall of the curtain. His acting was a revelation, and as welcome as it was unexpected. An admirable foil to all this passion and humanity is provided in the Captain Skinner of Mr. E. S. Willard,

one of those cool, polished, daring villains that no one else can pourtray so well. Miss Eastlake, if not powerful enough for the stronger scenes in the play, is sympathetic and touching in others, and Mr. George Barrett, as Jaikes, the faithful old servant, gives as complete and perfect a character-sketch as could be desired by anyone. It is an admirable realisation of character, and one that shows the actor in a better light than he has yet appeared. In keeping with the part, he is pathetic, but at times there comes just that delicate touch of humour which can only be imparted by a true artist, and which adds extra point and value to an interpretation of singular perfection. In the small part of the Detective, Mr. Walter Speakman plays with precision and ability, and makes a success. Miss M. Clitherow, a child-actress, deserves great credit for a pretty bit of acting, and Mr. Charles Coote plays a cockney clerk who robs his master, in an able manner. The drama is placed on the stage in a most complete style, and some of the "sets" and changes are marvels of mechanical invention and ingenuity. The scenery has been painted by Messrs. Walter Hann, Stafford Hall, and Bruce Smith, and Mr. William Beverley.

"THE PROMISE OF MAY."

A New and Original Rustic Drama, in Three Acts, in Prose, by Alfred Tennyson.
Produced at the Globe Theatre on Saturday, November 11th, 1882.

Farmer Dobson ... Mr. Charles Kelly.	Higgins ... ... Mr. A. Phillips.
Edgar ... ... Mr. Hermann Vezin.	Jackson ... ... Mr. G. Stevens.
Farmer Steer ... ... Mr. H. Cameron.	Allen ... ... Mr. H. E. Russell.
Mr. Wilson ... ... Mr. E. T. March.	Dora Steer ... ... Mrs. Bernard-Beere
James ... ... Mr. H. Halley.	Eva ... ... Miss E. Ormsby.
Dan Smith ... ... Mr. C. Medwin.	Sally ... ... Miss A. Leighton.
Milly ... ... Miss Maggie Hunt.	

It would at this time be a thankless and ungrateful task to attempt any minute analysis of Mr. Tennyson's new drama. Received with impatience, and even with intolerance, by the audience assembled to witness the first representation, it has since been almost unanimously condemned by the organs of the daily and weekly press. The verdict that has been pronounced would seem to leave no room for appeal. It is certain in tone and confident in the manner of its expression. The critics, with one or two exceptions, are agreed that Mr. Tennyson lacks the qualities necessary for the successful composition of a stage-play, and they are further agreed that this is the worst and weakest of the several experiments he has made in the drama. To judge from the published notices, it might also be assumed that "The Promise of May" compares

unfavourably even with the feeblest productions of other and less-gifted writers. It is, of course, possible that all this may be true. The character of the first night's reception is, at any rate, placed beyond the reach of doubt. Nor is there room for much dispute as to Mr. Tennyson's claims to the title of a practical dramatist. But then it may be fairly urged that his failure in this respect was made known long ago. It was manifest in "The Falcon" and in "Queen Mary," and it was only concealed in "The Cup" by reason of the exceptional splendour of the mise-en-scene. The critics and the public ought, therefore, both to have been prepared for a lack of resource and ingenuity in fitting even a simple story to the requirements of the stage; and we may take it that they were so prepared, and that the signal failure of "The Promise of May," though it might, perhaps, have been averted by more expert handling of the material at the disposal of the dramatist, is really to be ascribed to quite other causes. It is due, not to the triteness of the theme or to the weakness of the plot, but solely and wholly to the introduction of a single character whose presence on the scene was probably reckoned by the author as an essential condition of his work. The personality of Edgar, though it has been studied calmly and dispassionately by play-goers who have since visited the theatre, was a positive offence to the audience of the first night. With every desire to give a hearty welcome to the new manageress of the theatre, and to recognise the fine artistic sense and the liberal spirit which had governed the production of the piece, with an evident wish, also, to exonerate the actor from any share of responsibility for the disgust which his performance evoked, it was nevertheless patent to all who were present on the occasion that the audience were irresistibly impelled to make known their sentiments with regard to Mr. Tennyson's luckless creation.

But the question whether Mr. Tennyson himself is wholly responsible for this result still remains unanswered. It is not always the author who deserves to be credited with a failure, and in the present case there is ground for the belief that the public were at least partly in fault. The world of the stage is a very little world, peopled with well-worn and familiar types of character, each of whom is readily recognised by the experienced play-goer as he steps upon the scene. The dramatist who ventures beyond these narrow limits does so at his peril, and he may be sure that any attempt to add to the little community of conventional stage

puppets will be gravely resented. A character that is strange to the theatre, is by a large number of persons therefore assumed to be untrue to nature. The author is convicted of improbability merely because he chooses to enlarge the mirror that art holds up to nature, and to place it so that it will reflect in sharper outline the intellectual movement of his time. In some sense this has been Mr. Tennyson's fate. Edgar is a character not perhaps very profoundly conceived or very skilfully introduced into the fabric of a rustic drama. It may be acknowledged further that the means by which his nature is exposed are essentially undramatic; the words too liberally assigned to him do no more than describe the man as he ought to be, and the action in which he takes part is not sufficiently complex to enable the audience to study his nature under different aspects. But granting all these defects, for which the author must alone be held responsible, is it not equally clear that the audience were animated as much by a dislike for the character as by dissatisfaction with the dramatist? They declined to believe in the probable existence of such a man, not because he was unknown to their experience, but because they had never before encountered him in a theatre. This, at least, is an arguable view of the question to which the critics of Mr. Tennyson's play have scarcely allowed sufficient weight.

The piece, as already stated, was perfectly mounted, and the acting was generally excellent. The part of Dora Steer gives no great opportunity for the display of power, but the scene in the last act is sufficiently trying to the actress, and here Mrs. Bernard-Beere played with admirable dignity and feeling. As Farmer Dobson, Mr. Charles Kelly is enabled to endow a slight sketch of character with force and individuality. There are very few actors who would have had the courage to undertake the part of Edgar, and there is certainly no one who could have executed a difficult task with greater tact and judgment than were shown by Mr. Hermann Vezin. Smaller parts were carefully played by Mr. Cameron and Mr. Russell, while Miss Emmeline Ormsby gave a sympathetic rendering of the character of Eva.

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NEXT SPRING.

THEIR loveliness of life and leaf,
At last the waving trees have shed,
The garden ground is sown with grief,
The gay chrysanthemum is dead.
There is no comfort in the year,
Despair has slowly tolled his knell,
The world's existence is a tear,
And life but one supreme farewell.
But oh, my love! remember this:
There must be birth and blossoming;
Nature will waken with a kiss
Next Spring!

When I behold your troubled face,
And all the anguish in your eyes,
Most perfect picture! let me trace
Therein the love that never dies.
Though sorrow's waves may drown the form,
And touch the lips so sweetly curled,
I still would shelter from the storm
The life that binds me to the world.
For oh, dear love! remember well,
We both have many songs to sing,
And I have everything to tell,
Next Spring!

Late, was it not? this mystic year,
We came together—you and I?
We saw the river through a tear,
And weeping, felt the roses die.
We dreamed and saw the swallows fled,
The garden stripp'd of her attire,
And then, when all the world was dead,
We both sat watching by the fire.
But oh, my love! there will begin
Another life! the primrose-ring!
Deep woods that we must whisper in
Next Spring!

November, 1882. C. S.

NEXT SPRING.

(SEE POEM.)

Our Omnibus-Box.

I WAS speaking to an American gentleman the other day about the attitude of an English audience towards one of the first literary men of his age, who ventured to turn dramatist, and dared to encounter the pain and the humiliation—nay, the public execration—that seem to be inseparable from a performance of one of his plays. "Suppose," I said, "your Longfellow had written a play and consented to have it performed, and supposing the work was not wholly in accordance with modern taste as applied to modern plays, what would your American public have done? Would they have ridiculed, chaffed, sneered at and insulted the composition, however weak, however trivial, however undramatic?" "No, sir," said the American, "they would have had more respect for their poet Longfellow, for the people loved him. They would never have insulted him. They would quietly, and without indignation, have walked out. They never hiss great men or small men in America." "Thank you," said I, "I thought so."

And then I thought of the temper of the audience, the thoughtlessness, the smallness, and the triviality of the assembled people who sat down to consider the work of one far greater in the estimation of the world than Longfellow—I mean Alfred Tennyson. I should like to give you an idea of the scene that occurred at the Globe Theatre when the Poet Laureate allowed his play, "The Promise of May," to be produced, in order to show what risks all ambitious and unconventional dramatists run. It was a Saturday night—unfortunate circumstance in London—when the beer-houses close early and dramatic composition has to suffer for the eccentricities of the Licensing Acts. The people are let out from their shops early on Saturday afternoon, and having wasted a considerable amount of time they do not care to be kept waiting for their theatrical amusements. In my humble opinion a manager runs a severe risk who produces his play on a Saturday evening at all. It used to be the fairest audience that could be collected; it has grown to be the most noisy, the most insolent, the most intolerant, the most cruel.

People who come into a theatre for a spree are incapable of judging of a work of art. The Poet Laureate, poor innocent man! was led into a deeper pitfall. The play, that should have commenced at eight o'clock in order to please the people, was not started until a quarter past nine. The assembled audience had nothing to do but wait and kick their heels in the theatre, with nothing to amuse them but a comedietta played by two ladies, who do not rise above the level of amateurs. The patience of the audience was exhausted, and Mr. Tennyson unquestionably suffered from the error in judgment of the management. Overture after overture was played and hooted. When the overture proper began, it was not listened to. All the noisier section of the audience was thinking of their trains, their trams, and the threatened closing of the public-houses and restaurants. The theatre was overcrowded. People had forced their way into the pit and gallery where they could not by any possibility see, and when the play was not found to be immediately satisfactory, the discontented, wearied, and overcrowded audience adopted ridicule as the easiest form of relief.

I don't suppose that one of those people who vented their ill-temper on the work of Alfred Tennyson—however bad in their proper judgment—reflected that this very great man has been delighting the English people for forty years, and has written things that will outlive this century. I don't suppose that one person in the theatre desired to show discourtesy to this grand and venerable poet who is the distinguishing feature of his age. But they did for all that. The author of "Maud" and "In Memoriam," the "Idylls of the King," and the finest lyrics of the century, was no more to the assembled public than any hack dramatic writer of his time. It meant nothing to the "mob of gentlemen" who decide upon the fate of plays. If it had, it would have been treated with ordinary respect. If it had, it would have encountered ordinary reverence.

There is no one who has supported more than I have done in my humble way the right of private judgment in the matter of stage plays: there is no one who has encouraged more that grand power of the pit that has kept the drama as fair, as healthy, and as vigorous as it is. There is no one who has such a hatred of paid claques and packed houses. But I will candidly own that I do not

think that the pit has recently been equal to or alive to its great responsibilities. I do not think that the pit has shown the old generosity and candour. I do not think that the pit has had that balance and judgment that will by the power of the pit cleanse the stage from trumpery and encourage fine and noble and manly work. I myself was a pittite in the days of Phelps at Sadler's Wells and of Charles Kean at the Princess's. I saw all the Shakespearian revivals of each management, but I stake my life that no pit of my day would have allowed Alfred Tennyson to have been hissed or ridiculed either at Sadler's Wells or the Princess's. It was over twenty years ago, and Tennyson was not as great or as "grand an old man" as now, but I stake my existence that no Sadler's Wells pit and no Princess's pit about the year 1860 would have permitted an insult towards the Poet Laureate of England who wrote for the stage. I do not see the men of sober judgment, the men to sway the excited and unruly spirit, the elder men who once were mingled with the young to check, to guide, and to influence. It seems to me that the custody of dramatic literature is in not very safe keeping when there is no respect for such a genius as the Poet Laureate. Would Robert Browning—a born dramatist—ever encounter the indignity that has been received by Alfred Tennyson? I think not. And are the men and women—take them all round, stalls and boxes as well as pit and gallery—in an intellectual condition to decide fairly on works of men to whom vulgar jokes and silly slang are as unfamiliar as the Chinese language?

Mr. Dion Boucicault is very outspoken on the subject of first-night audiences. Speaking of the first performance of "Rip van Winkle" at the Comedy Theatre, he says:

"But the occasion was remarkable for another event. You "are aware that there has existed in London, for some little "time past, a party of persons who call themselves 'first-nighters.' "This is an organised gang who attend the production of all "important plays. With what object they conspire, I have not "heard, but it apparently seems to be to seize on any opportunity "of creating a diversion of the attention of the public from "the entertainment on the stage to a performance in the pit. "The managers of the Vaudeville, the Criterion, the Court, and "other theatres have protested against this conspiracy, but their "protests and exposure of the matter have been in vain, until

"Mr. Henderson, the manager of the Comedy, took the business "in hand on Saturday night. When the doors were opened the "expectant crowd outside were informed that every seat in the "house had been taken or sold! 'Even the pit and gallery "tickets?' 'Yes.' 'Well, we will accept standing room.' "'Very sorry, but no standees are allowed to the inconvenience "of the audience.' A sufficient force of police obliged the "defeated gang to stand aside while the holders of checks "passed in; whether such checks had been bought, or had "been given away, mattered little; the gang saw themselves "checkmated."

"During the performance I recognised more than one spot where "the 'first-nighters,' had they been present, would have exercised "their functions. A scene which was tediously spun out would have "elicited a long-drawn comic yawn from some one in the gallery. "It was Saturday night. The drinking-saloons close at midnight. "When half-past eleven was imminent, the comic gentleman at the "back of the pit would have audibly reminded Mr. Brough, who "played Derrick, the inn-keeper, that his establishment must close "anyhow, presently, whether the piece was played out or not. To "this wretched, contemptible condition the London audience have "been drifting! There is a section of the press that plays the same "part in print, and writers occupying the back-seats of journalism "that are conspicuous in art for their lack of faith, hope, and charity; "in whom vanity is ill-concealed under an affectation of fastidious-"ness, and jealousy of all success and distinction is betrayed by the "self-sufficient sneer that pervades and characterises their ribald "style."

This subject is so interesting that I cordially invite correspondence and discussion on it. No one will suspect me of being hard on my old friends in the pit and gallery, but I must say that the majority suffers to go unpunished and unrebuked a great deal of silly insolence on the part of the minority.

I have stood at the grave of one of the kindest of friends and the best of men. As long as I have known anyone or anything, I have known George Rose—long before he ever dreamed of becoming "Arthur Sketchley," and, as such, a public character in the world of letters and of amusements. It is only of his public

life that it is becoming to speak here, though all who knew him intimately appreciated and valued his wide knowledge, his genial and incessant humour, and his strong common-sense. Long before George Rose became Arthur Sketchley and astonished all London by his first entertainment at the Hanover Square Rooms, called, "Mrs. Brown at the Play," he was known in private circles as the best of good company, and a most amusing raconteur. It has been said, but with little accuracy, that Mrs. Brown was only a clever imitation of the Mrs. Gamp of Charles Dickens. It was nothing of the kind, for Mrs. Brown and her adventures were known to the Oxford undergraduates of over forty years ago, and consequently before Mrs. Gamp was born. George Rose had a wonderful gift of observation, and originally, as he has often told me, took the idea of Mrs. Brown from an old nurse whose habits and loquacity he studied during a long illness as a boy. Under all the cockneyisms and superficial vulgarity of the old lady was, however, a strong current of sound common-sense that was sincerely appreciated by the light-reading public. It was not because Mrs. Brown talked nonsense, but such downright good sense that the people studied, nay, devoured her views of men and manners, and things in general. Arthur Sketchley was, in fact, a satirist when the world believed him to be a mere droll. He was more of a cynic than a mere entertainer. Unfortunately he began to amuse the public too late in life, when his vivacity was failing him, and his voice very treacherous. But had he entered the lists as a young man, say about the year 1845, when he was in his prime of fun and frolic, he would have been as successful as Albert Smith was subsequently.

Always a persistent play-goer, as his father was before him, Arthur Sketchley had seen so much of the actors of the past that he was not inclined to be tolerant of the actors of the present, and in the later years of his life the disappointments and anxieties with which it was burdened embittered his criticisms and caused many to misrepresent his gentle and unselfish nature. But it was not ever so, and I can recall delightful Sunday evenings at the house of Charles Mathews in Pelham Place, some twenty years ago, when amidst such excellent raconteurs as our excellent host Charles Mathews, his friend Frank Matthews, Henry J. Byron, Edmund Yates, Palgrave Simpson, and Walter Gordon, our dead friend

"Rosey," as he was then called, was the "best of all good company."

There were few things that added to his disappointment so much, or so embittered his later years, as his inability to keep pace with younger dramatists. He had already written two clever and successful plays—"How Will They Get Out of It," and "The Dark Cloud," at the St. James's Theatre during Miss Herbert's management—and often wrote for Mrs. Swanborough's management at the Strand. But in play-writing, as in most other things that he attempted, he came too late into the field for any practical purposes, and could not patiently endure the charlatanism that is connected with the greater part of success. Too late he went to America, Australia, and elsewhere; too late he wrote plays, and novels, and books; too late he began entertaining the public, too late he left off. But those who knew him well, and who were permitted to peep under the mask that he chose to assume, can bear witness to his upright nature and to his warm and affectionate disposition. When anyone was in trouble he was sure to find them out; his purse and his good advice were always at the service of the distressed. How many death-beds and death-scenes has he not softened by his presence? How many lives has he not helped on to a brighter and more peaceful future? And now he has gone, happily without pain, to enjoy the calm and the repose for which he prayed so long and so earnestly. May he rest in peace!

The members of the Roscius Dramatic Club opened their fifth season on October 24th with a performance at Ladbroke Hall of J. P. Wooler's comedietta "Orange Blossoms" and Buckstone's "Leap Year." A revised and compressed edition of the latter piece, as played at the Haymarket Theatre by Mr. John S. Clarke was given. In "Orange Blossoms" Mr. Percy F. Marshall, the manager of the club, scored well as the woman-hating Septimus Symmetry, making every point and infusing into the impersonation much briskness and spirit. The character of the soi-disant man-hater, Little Loo, was assigned to Miss Laura Graves, who did not make enough of the part, which she pitched throughout in too low a key. This, however, was no doubt attributable to a great extent to her evident nervousness. Colonel Clarence and

Falcon Hope were adequately represented by Messrs. T. E. Forster and E. Gordon-Taylor, and considerable praise is due to Miss Kate Erlam and Miss M. C. Bayley, who, as Mrs. Hope and Mrs. Clarence respectively, played with a decision and finish which could only have been derived from much practice and study. In "Leap Year" Miss Laura Graves was seen to greater advantage as Lady Flora Flowerdew, a quiet pathetic part, evidently more suited to her style, while her pleasing and ladylike appearance at once enlisted the good-will of the audience and predisposed them to overlook the occasional shortcomings in her rendering of a somewhat trying rôle. Miss Lottie Roberts, as Miss O'Leary, the lively Irish spinster who takes advantage of leap-year to make love to the shy Mr. Dimple, got plenty of fun and laughter out of her part. Mr. T. E. Forster was a trifle loud as Sir William Willoughby, but otherwise played with care and earnestness. Mr. P. F. Marshall was not up to his usual form as Dimple. The rest of the cast was as follows: Captain Mouser, Mr. H. S. Ram; Joseph, Mr. E. Gordon-Taylor; Diggs Mr. E. George; Mrs. Crisp, Miss F. Elliott; and Susan, Miss N. Willmott. Miss Rose Dosell officiated at the pianoforte, playing a capital selection of music with an elegance and refinement which met with well-deserved recognition at the hands of a large and fashionable audience. The next performance of the club is announced for December 12th. The honorary-secretary and treasurer of the club is Mr. A. Louis Guye.

Captain Evatt Acklom commenced a series of afternoon entertainments at the Steinway Hall on November 15th. The programme consisted of readings and recitations by Captain Acklom from the works of Charles Dickens, Clement Scott, and G. R. Sims, together with songs from Miss Agnes Thorndike, and pianoforte music by Mdlle. Adela Faux. The entertainments were announced for continuation on Wednesday afternoons, November 22nd and 29th.

Mr. Samuel Brandram announces an eighth series of nine afternoon recitals, commencing at Willis's Rooms, on January 16th. The first recital will be "Romeo and Juliet," and it is to be hoped that Mr. Brandram's wonderful power of memory and

capital manner of reciting will attract large attendances to his delightful afternoons.

Lovers of artistic effect and fanciful design would do well to pay a visit to the Indian Art Gallery, 428, Oxford Street. It is truly a storehouse of art. Here are to be seen all manner of grotesque and beautiful draperies, rich silks and warm rugs, wonderful examples of carving, quaint musical and battle instruments—in fact such a mingling of the fantastic with the beautiful as would have delighted even the vivid imagination of Edgar Allan Poe. The eye is pleased and the fancy satisfied by a glance at a tenth of all the wonderful objects which are here brought together. Not to mention hundreds of other pleasing things, one cannot help remarking on the variety and beauty of some embroidered Dacca muslins, the fineness and delicacy of some plain silks from Calcutta, and the colour and warmth of some cotton stuffs from Agra. Then there are also such useful things as glove-boxes, paper-knives, and picture frames, all inlaid in a most marvellous manner with gold and silver. How some of our foremost musicians would stare if they were asked to play upon some of the strange-looking instruments which are here exhibited, and out of which the Indians manage to extract many pleasing sounds! And how pretty many of our theatres would look if they were decorated with some of the draperies which are displayed here in such variety?

The 9th of November will henceforth be esteemed a memorable anniversary by the musicians of this metropolis. It was during the evening of last Lord Mayor's Day that the orchestral introduction to "Parsifal" was performed for the first time in London, at St. James's Hall, and under the leading of Hans Richter. On that occasion English musical society came to the front in imposing force, considering the season of the year. Our virtuosi and dilettanti alike, knowing how just and righteous is the object sought to be attained by the two autumnal Richter Concerts, were quite as anxious to greet the great conductor with a fervent welcome as they were to hear Richard Wagner's dernier mot. Richter was visibly touched by the extraordinary warmth of the reception accorded him; and, indeed, I do not remember to have witnessed

a more vehement and ungovernable outburst of enthusiasm in a London concert-room.

The "Parsifal Vorspiel" is truly and deeply beautiful. As a study of tone-colour and a Stimmungsbild, or musical-picture of feeling, it is unsurpassed by any of Wagner's previous triumphs in either of those lines, not even excepting the noble introduction to the third act of "Meistersaenger." Animated throughout by the most reverent devotional spirit, the music was constantly suggestive to me of the rich glow of dark-hued gems and of the sweet subtle perfume exuding from "some unseen censer swung by seraphim." Certain of my friends, whose souls are steeped in "Parsifal" the opera (of which I do not know a note), tell me that the Vorspiel is merely a hint of what is to follow, unusually brief and circumscribed for a Wagnerian epitome of Leitmotive, as regards the incidents and characters of the play it is intended to introduce to the audience. If this be so, all I can say is that it is the grandest, most sublime hint ever yet imparted to me in sound. No musical composition exists that is more profoundly, more touchingly solemn; but its solemnity, far from being Pagan in character, as might have been expected in religious music composed by the author of the "Pilgrims' Chorus," is essentially and exclusively Christian. That it should be so is a highly-interesting illustration of the universality of Wagner's genius. An intellectual disciple of Schopenhauer, he has over and over again denounced Christianity, in black and white, as an obstacle to progress, a foe to art, and a baneful restraint upon imaginativeness. And yet, when it pleases him, or rather, hits his fancy, to write a "consecrational stage-play" on a Christian episode, and set it to music, he is able to imbue his creative spirit with a Christian temper of composition that would do honour to an apostle. Bach in his "Passions," Mozart in his "Requiem," Handel in his "Messiah," never produced a more intensely religious musical utterance than this "tone-preface" to "Parsifal." The leading themes chiefly emphasised in it are the "Sacramental Formula," a six-bar subject, touchingly mournful, which, had any other composer but Wagner written it, I should unhesitatingly designate as a recitativo—but, of course, from the Bayreuth point of view it is a strongly marked melody; the "Grail Unveiling Motive," which vaguely reminded me of the

"Primeval Element Motive" in "Rheingold"; the "Dresden Amen," familiar to all lovers of the "Reformation Symphony;" and a "Hymn of Faith," to which I should conceive it difficult for any person of a musical organisation to listen to without experiencing all but uncontrollable emotion.

The performance was no less remarkable than the demeanour of the audience—the former, grave, tender, and loving; the latter, hushed to an unusual stillness, and manifestly oblivious of everything but the strange glamour of the music, which produced so soul-subduing an impression upon all present that, at its close, there accrued a few seconds' hesitation as to whether or not it would be desirous to applaud so solemnly sacred a work. When, after this awe-stricken pause, the applause came, it was long, loud, and enthusiastic; but, to my mind, the moment or two of breathless silence that succeeded the final wave of Richter's bâton was a truer homage to the composer's genius than the subsequent storm of plaudits.

Another absolute novelty of the first Richter Concert—at least, as far as the London musical public is concerned—was Villiers Stanford's Serenade in G major, a composition of unquestionable, if somewhat unequal merit, which obtained a most positive, and in every way legitimate success. It consists of five movements, the first and last of which, whilst eminently scholarly, tuneful, and ingeniously orchestrated, are less interesting, because less strikingly original, than the remaining three. The Scherzo (No. 2) was redemanded with such unmistakable resolution and unanimity, that Richter, contrary to his custom, relaxed the sternness he had previously displayed with respect to the call for a repeat of the "Meistersaenger Overture," and granted the desired encore. In my opinion the notturno (Adagio) is the best number of the work, certainly more by way of being "caviare to the general" than either the feathery Scherzo or the extremely clever, bright, and workmanlike Intermezzo, which I could, however, gladly have heard a second time. Mr. Stanford was twice summoned to the platform, and on both appearances had a splendid reception from orchestra and audience alike. Except himself, nobody in the hall was more sincerely gratified by the success of the Serenade than Hans Richter, to whom Englishmen

in general, and British musicians in particular, are greatly indebted for his generous persistence in fostering the native talent of the country in which I have reason to hope he will ere long take up his permanent residence.

The first performance in London of "The Redemption," Gounod's new oratorio (or sacred trilogy, as the composer prefers to have it called), took place on November 1st, at Albert Hall, under the direction of Mr. Joseph Barnby. The audience was only limited by the capacity of the building, and included the Prince and Princess of Wales, several other members of the Royal Family, and nearly all the prominent professional and amateur musicians of the metropolis.

The work has been so thoroughly criticised, that little remains to be said of its conspicuous merits and defects. Its proper interpretation requires a most conscientious and capable conductor, an excellent orchestra, and a grand chorus, with solo-vocalists who are thorough artists, and who are able to adequately present the deep religious feeling of the work without thought of personal display. In fact the music given to the soloists (with the possible exception of one air for the soprano) forbids any attempt at individuality. The recitatives of the tenor and bass narrators, accompanied by the strings with what comes dangerously near to wearying reiterations of chromatic progressions, can only be relieved from tiresome monotony by the very purest and best style of delivery, while the words of the Saviour can only be trusted to the utterance of a reverent, as well as artistic singer. Certainly no living vocalists could so perfectly fulfil all these requirements as Charles Santley and Edward Lloyd. No praise can be too high for their share in the general success of the performance. Madame Albani repeated her triumph at Birmingham, and some of the audience breaking through the restrictions as to applause, had the bad taste to desire an encore for her principal air. Mr. Barnby, very properly resenting such an interruption, went directly on with the work.

The contralto part (created by Madame Patey, at Birmingham) was successfully undertaken by Madame Isabel Fassett, who sang with especial tenderness and true feeling the air of the "Virgin

Mother at the Cross." Miss Santley and Mr. Pyatt were entirely satisfactory in the little falling to their share. The orchestra—though seemingly weak in strings in some portions—the organ, and the fine chorus, were effective throughout the representation, which was listened to with rapt attention by the immense audience. "The Redemption" is announced for performance at the Crystal Palace on December 2nd, under the direction of Mr. August Manns, the principal soloists being Mesdames Hutchinson and Fassett, Messrs. Lloyd and Santley.

Upon my word I do not know what the amateur world would do without Mr. Samuel French of the Strand, who at this time of the year is in great requisition, for are not the Christmas holidays at hand, and country-house life in full swing? You will remember that I told you last year that Mr. French had hit upon the happy idea of providing set scenes, pictures, proscenium borders, practical doors and windows, by which any drawing-room or hall can be speedily converted into a stage. These can be packed up in a convenient space and sent anywhere in town or country, when the theatricals are decided on. "Ah!" you will say, "that is the great question." But nothing is more simple when you come to test it, for Mr. French has amplified and added to his descriptive catalogue, that gives a short idea of the character and scope of the thousands of plays that can be obtained at this interesting establishment. Before this catalogue came into existence I found I was a kind of "official referee" as to winter plays and pastimes. "Oh, dear Mr. Editor, we are going to act some plays this winter, so do recommend us something good. There are four of us girls, two great stupid brothers, and a handsome male cousin!" That was the kind of letter that I was expected to answer by return of post. I had not the heart to refuse, but I am no longer referred to now that the descriptive catalogue has come into play. It is interesting, precise, and exhaustive. I may remind those who collect plays that Mr. French has recently published Mr. James Albery's "Two Roses," Mr. Tom Taylor's "Unequal Match," Mr. Wybert Reeves' version of "George Geith," and a clever little book of poems and stories for recitation called "The Cabman's Story, and other Readings." I am delighted to do what I can for my fellow-creatures, but in the matter of guiding family opinion on the matter of plays, Mr. French's catalogue is of far more value than I could

ever be. Let amateurs call in at 89, Strand, where they will obtain advice gratis, and everything they want.

Wisely, I think, did the clever young A.D.s at Cambridge select "The Critic" for this year's performance. In the immortal "tradgedy," good, bad, indifferent, and eccentric acting are all of value—the more diverse the style, the merrier the fun. It was certainly a very funny show all round, for we had big voices and little voices, growlings and squeakings, and more or less successful imitations of Mr. Irving, from the various characters in the tragedy. Particularly good was the duel scene, and Lord Burleigh (Mr. Oswald-Smith) was perfect and never missed a line, for obvious reasons. Messrs. Brocklehurst and Booth, as Raleigh and Hatton, and Mr. Townley as Tilburina, made distinct hits—the lady looked really girlish and pretty.

However, the characters proper merit a more serious word. Perhaps the best all-round bit of acting was Mr. Ogilvie's Sneer. It was quiet, pointed, and clever. The Puff of Mr. Brochner was unequal. In the first act he was inclined to over-emphasise and to excess in action, and seemed inclined to distrust his own powers of producing effect, without evident labour. Mr. Thursby's Dangle looked well but was somewhat nervous in gesture, and in Fretful, Mr. Shuter was noticeable for a marvellous make-up, of his own device and creation. He is a capital actor, but curiously imperfect in his words. The first act rather dragged on the whole—it generally does—and the audience, I think, felt good-humouredly diffident as to the ultimate result.

However, when the "larks" began, doubts vanished. Puff got more command of himself, and was comically sly and self-possessed. Sneer and Dangle sat on their chairs and watched and criticised with faint and foppish praise; and as each character developed his own peculiar method of histrionic art, the audience were fairly coaxed into honest and explosive laughter. Talk of "schools of acting!" Bless you! there are more "schools" among the A.D.C. than there are colleges in Cambridge. I was struck with the excellence of the stage-management, for which Mr. H. A. Newton and Mr. J. R. Manners (who made a hit with Lady Teazle, I am told, last year) merit much praise. The attempt at the "kneeling exit," the farewell between Tilburina

and her Don Whiskerandos, and the ultimate destruction of the Armada, were genuinely comic. Perhaps somebody did drop his voice at the end of his sentence, and somebody else's gestures were too confined and close, but somebody No. 1 was really the fun of the piece, and somebody No. 2 was a "lady," or, at all events, looked like a very pretty girl. So criticism is conquered.

Much better than "The Critic," from a seriously professional point of view, was Burnand and Sullivan's musical "Cox and Box," the orchestra consisting of Mr. Charles Villiers Stanford, assisted by a piano in the wings. Mr. Brochner, for this piece, had made a rare sacrifice, he had shaved a moustache on which, I am told, he set much value, and he had cropped his "once luxuriant hair" to convict-like closeness. His Cox was vastly better than his Puff; not only was it worked in the true spirit of quiet, eccentric comedy, but the actor is a good musician, and never wavered over a quaver. Box was entrusted to Mr. G. J. Maquay, who has the sweetest tenor in the 'Varsity — a pure, true, and flexible voice — and he acts quaintly, if somewhat languidly. Bonner (Mr. McNamara) was hardly up to the acting mark of his two confrères; but his wholly unmistakable Irish accent and military bearing atoned for some little pauses and slips. At all events he rattled out his "Rataplan" with a decision worthy of a warrior and a landlord. The famous duet was encored, but the best song of the night was the "Lullaby Bacon," tenderly and dreamily sung by Mr. Maquay. Taking it as a whole, I recognise in the A.D.C. the qualities of sound and honest work, of a very serious effort to adhere strictly to the rules of the art (whether handed down to them from the days of Euripides, or suggested to them by Mr. Arthur Cecil, or lectured to them by Mr. Boucicault, I cannot determine), and in four of the company (Messrs. Ogilvie, Shuter, Brochner, and Maquay) decided acting ability. Two actors, at all events, of note are playing to-night on the London stage, who began in the little theatre in Jesus Lane, and if modern Cambridge has any desire to continue the supply, like Cynisca's jealousy, "it will not faint for lack of sustenance."

Miss Calhoun, whose good promise as an actress The Theatre was one of the few publications which recognised, has been engaged by Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft for the Haymarket Theatre.

Listen to our æsthetic Boswell! Mrs. Langtry has won her

languishing biographer, who, in the form of Oscar Wilde, has liberated his overcharged soul. Do listen to this:

"It is only in the best Greek gems, on the silver coins of "Syracuse, or among the marble figures on the Parthenon frieze, "that one can find the ideal representation of the marvellous beauty "of that face which laughed through the leaves last night as "Hester Grazebrook.

"Pure Greek it is, with the grave low forehead, the exquisitely "arched brow; the noble chiselling of the mouth, shaped as if it "were the mouth-piece of an instrument of music, the supreme "and splendid curve of the cheek, the augustly pillared throat "which bears it all: it is Greek, because the lines which compose "it are so definite and so strong, and yet so exquisitely "harmonised that the effect is one of simple loveliness purely: "Greek, because its essence and its quality, as is the quality of "music and of architecture, is that of beauty based on absolute "mathematical laws.

"But while art remains dumb and immobile in its passionless "serenity, with the beauty of this face it is different: the grey eyes "lighten into blue, or deepen into violet, as fancy succeeds "fancy; the lips become flower-like in laughter, or tremulous "as a bird's wing, mould themselves at last into the strong and "bitter moulds of pain or scorn"—and so on does Mr. Wilde rave. Well may Mrs. Langtry say, after such terrible treacle: "Save me from my friends!"

The Fine Art Society, 148, New Bond Street, are at present exhibiting an interesting collection of paintings of Venice, and a series of drawings illustrating Egyptian life. The latter pictures are drawn by Carl Haag, and amongst the paintings of Venice are works by the late J. W. Bunney, A. N. Roussouff, C. Van Haanen, E. J. Poynter, R.A., David Law, Birket Foster, J. Macwhirter, A.R.A., Henry Woods, A.R.A., Arthur Severn, George Reid, R.S.A., Gilbert Munger, S. Prout, and John Ruskin.

I publish a curious letter I have received; it certainly ought not to be laughed at, for the writer is evidently sincere:

"For some time past I have read The Theatre regularly, and "there is no magazine I enjoy more. But one thing I notice is, you "speak very highly of the drama and its influences for good, and

"yet I don't think there is a Christian man on the stage, at least "they never take any part in religious matters. There are clubs, "as the Garrick Club, Green Room Club, etc., but there is no "such thing as an Actor's Christian Association. Why is this? "Why do actors place the stage on a level with the Church as a "moral teacher, and yet not one actor out of perhaps thousands "taking a stand for religion? I wish you would take notice "of this in your most interesting magazine. I am sure it would "have a good effect. And if such a thing as a Christian Associa- "tion existed in dramatic circles, the prejudices of many outside "the profession, against actors and the drama, would be banished.— "I am, dear sir, yours very truly, a great admirer of the drama, "and its pillar of support, Henry Irving."

I hope that our friends and subscribers will interest themselves in the New Series of THE THEATRE, commencing with the next or January number. It will be an old friend with a new face, improved, I trust, in style, fashion, and appearance. From one of the most artistic studios in London will come two photographic portraits, executed in the highest style of that popular art —one of Mrs. Bernard-Beere, the manageress of the Globe Theatre, the other of Mr. Wilson Barrett, the manager of the Princess's Theatre. I find that the poems for recitation that I am enabled to give from time to time are extremely popular, particularly in the winter-time, when penny-readings and concerts are held, and so I am glad to announce that the next poem will be by a master of the craft—Mr. George R. Sims. The January number will appear very early—about the 15th of December—and our readers will be able to enjoy advance notes about the pantomimes and winter entertainments, a special article on pantomimes by that learned authority, Mr. Dutton Cook, a short story by a popular writer, and as much miscellaneous information on the stage, past and present, as I can collect, together with an anecdotical article on the career of Mr. J. L. Toole and an essay on Mr. Wilson Barrett. Business communications for the New Series should be addressed to Mr. David Bogue, 3, St. Martin's Place, Trafalgar Square, W.C.

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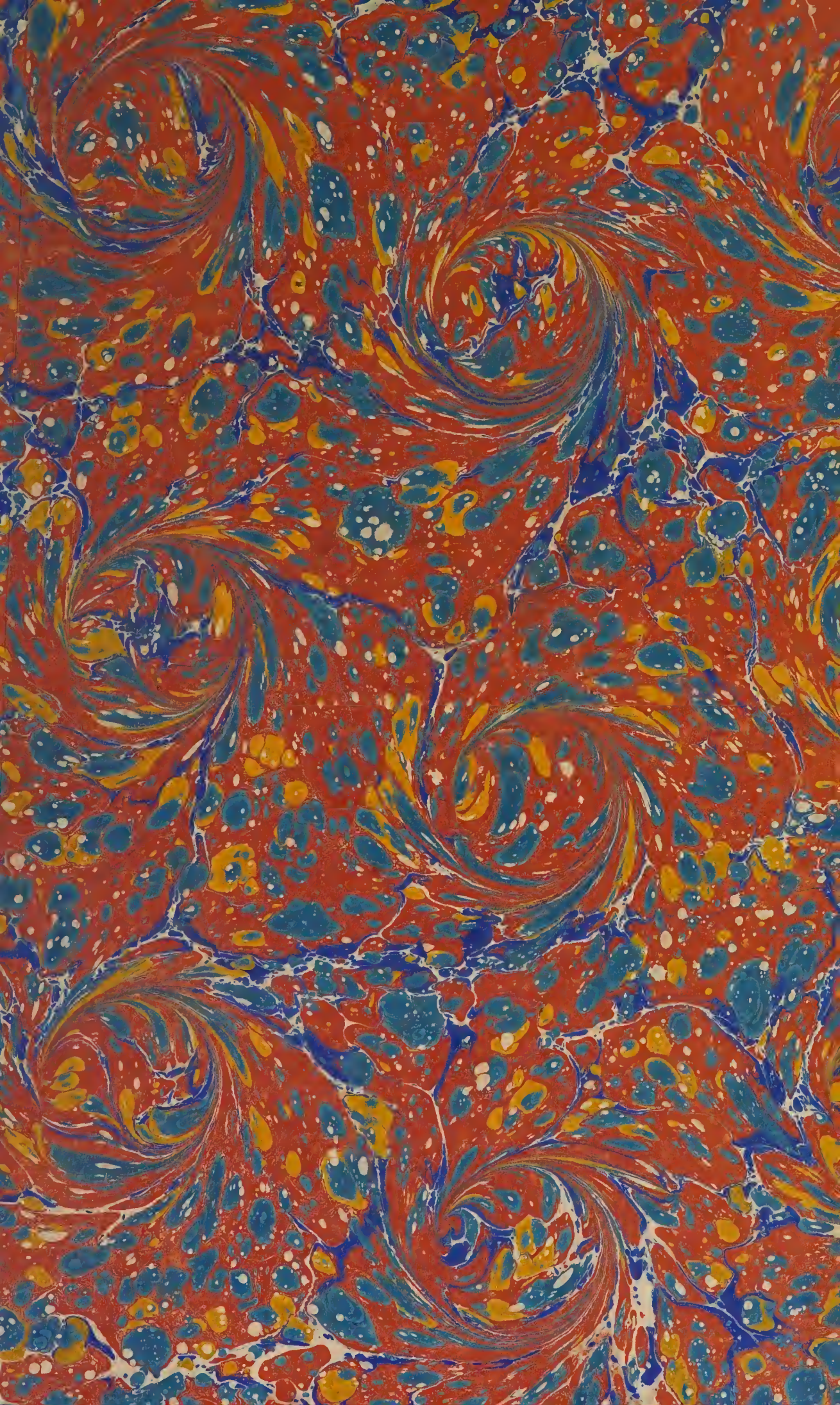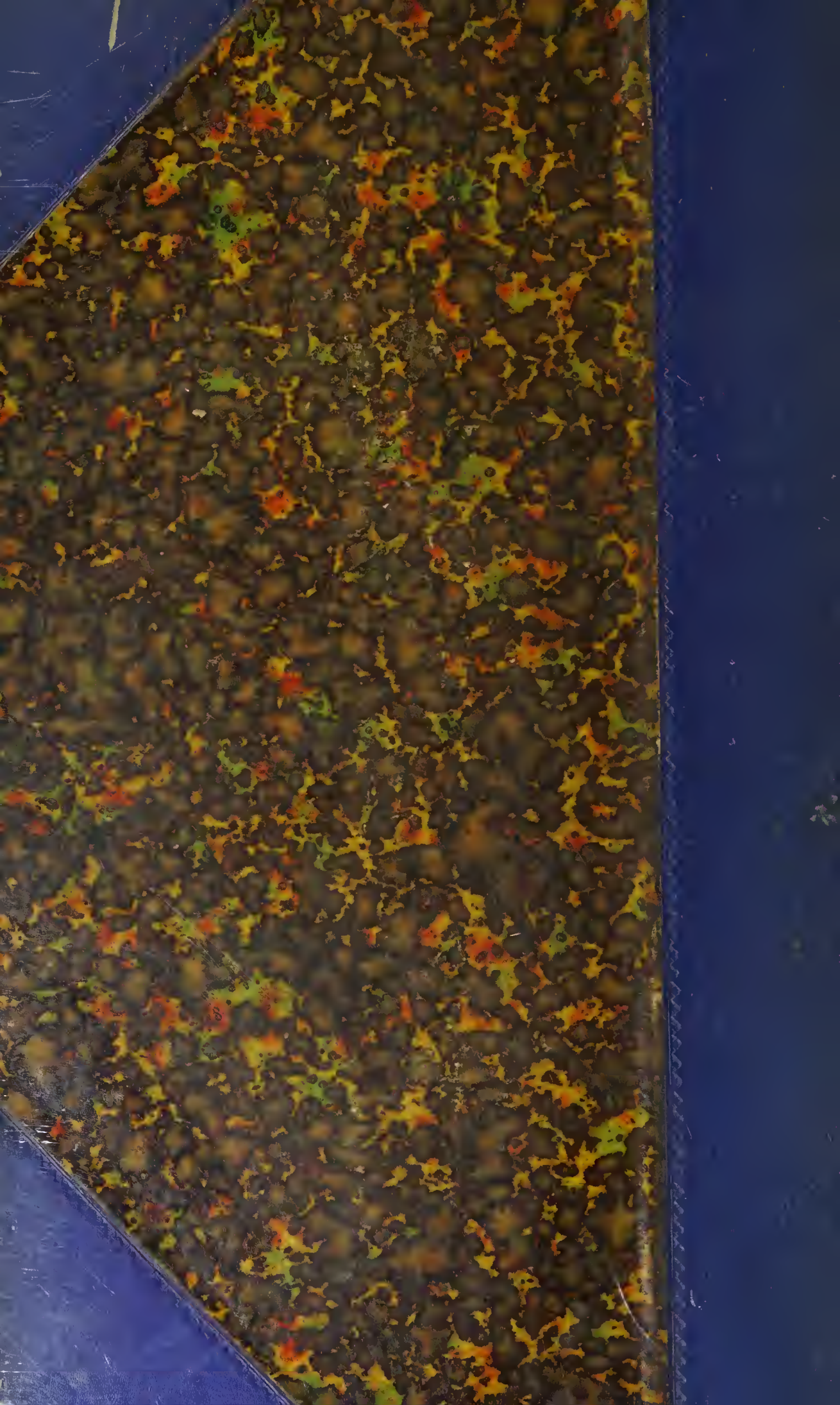
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